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X-e-24

TRAVELS

TO DISCOVER

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE.

X. e. 24

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TRAVELS

TO DISCOVER

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE,

IN THE YEARS

1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, & 1773.

BY

JAMES BRUCE OF KINNAIRD, ESQ.
F. R. S.

84695

THE THIRD EDITION,
CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,
A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

VOL. III.

X-2-24

The treasures these, hid from the bounded search
Of ancient knowledge; where, with annual pomp,
Rich king of floods! o'erflows the swelling Nile.
From his two springs, in Gojam's sunny realm,
Pure-welling out, he, through the lucid lake
Of fair Dembéa, rolls his infant stream.

THOMSON.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by George Ramsay and Company,
FOR ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE AND COMPANY, AND MANNERS AND MILLER, EDINBURGH;
AND LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN, LONDON.

1813.

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Translated from original MS.

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GEOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

ABYSSINIAN PROVINCES,

Introductory to the History of Abyssinia, in Books III. and IV.

THE Abyssinians account the Kebir Zaneguste, or Chronicle of Axum, a faithful repository of their ancient history. The slightest attention, however, may convince the reader, that it is the production of an ignorant monk, who used the Septuagint translation of the Bible, or rather the Geez* version, as the groundwork of a ridiculous fable, to please his countrymen. It seems to have been written after the restoration of the line of ancient kings in the person of Icon Amlac, A. D. 1268.

It contains no account of the city of Axum, the ancient metropolis; but an Appendix, which is usually added, gives a list of the officers whom Solomon sent along with his son Menilech; a history of the ceremonies at the coronation of the kings, of their donations to the city itself; of its being

* The Abyssinian writers call their country Ethiopia, and its inhabitants Agaazi or free men. The Arabic name is Habbesh, which is pronounced Abesh. The Geez is the name of the old language of the country, now used only in writings and books.

founded by Abreha and Atsbeha, two brothers, kings of Habbesh, near the tomb of Ethiopius, the son of Ham; with such a description of its ancient monuments as the ignorant friars give of those in Jerusalem. A catalogue of the kings of Ethiopia, from Arwé the serpent, who governed the country soon after the flood, to Teclahaimanout, in 1769; of the patriarchs of Alexandria, and the Mahometan caliphs; with a short chronicle of the reign of David, in which Axum was burned by Gragné, finish the collection. These lists are commonly found in all books which affect to treat of the national history from the earliest times; and exactly resemble those in the first chapters of the Jewish Chronicles. The names, and order, and reigns of the kings are very inaccurately transcribed, and the various readings are accordingly numerous. The first history which deserves any credit is that of the wars of Amda Sion with the Mahometans of Adel in the 13th century; that of Zera Jacob follows; after which the annals, though occasionally broken, are upon the whole tolerably complete. The history of long and brilliant reigns is always best preserved; in times of intestine commotion few having either courage or leisure to write. The following sketch of the Abyssinian monarchy, as it existed in the days of Zera Jacob and his descendant David, is extracted from the best authorities, and intended to prepare the reader for the perusal of the history of the nation, from the year 1268 to the time when Mr Bruce entered the country.

Abyssinia, in the days of Amda Sion, was bounded on the north by the 16th degree of north latitude, or the limit of the tropical rains; it extended on the south to Narea, perhaps to Caffa, in north latitude 7°; in a line of 540 geographical miles. On the east, the kingdom of Dawaro, one of its provinces, was bounded by the 44th degree E. L. from Greenwich; and Bizamo, its limit on the west, by the 35th degree. The Nile formed a strong natural boundary on the western side; but, though that river inclosed it also on the south, it was nearer its source, more inconsiderable, and thence a weaker obstruction to the Abyssinian arms. The ruling and greatest part of the inhabitants of this extent were of Arab origin, descendants of a colony from the Yemen, or Arabia Felix. The aboriginal tribes were reduced to dependence, or exiled to the mountains; the Galla had not

yet appeared; the Gafates were never considerable; the Shankala wandered around the frontiers, which, as in all barbarous kingdoms, were ill defined, and changed almost every year by annual warfare. After some account of the independent tribes on the north, the provinces may be mentioned in their natural order. Each of them is divided into many small districts, called, in Geez, Midr, or "the land." Towns, or villages, often mentioned in the national history, occur in these; nor must it form any objection to the accuracy of enumeration, that many districts have been swallowed up in larger governments, or that considerable towns have disappeared altogether, especially when we observe, that the natives uniformly give the name of a place, whatever may be its consequence, and leave you to guess at its situation from your own knowledge of the country. It is only to be regretted, that the list of small districts is by no means so complete as could be wished; that their relative situation is very undetermined; and that their existence within a respective province is all the certainty which can be obtained.

The wandering Arabs and Shankala inclose Abyssinia on the north. The former are Jahaleen *, from the opposite coast of the Red Sea, at a period subsequent to the time of Mahomet. The latter are the native inhabitants of ancient Ethiopia, woolly-haired, deep black, archers from their infancy, of a wandering pastoral life, and perhaps the descendants of the parent race of Negroes in all Africa. A very interesting account of this people is given by Mr Bruce in his history, in the Travels, of Yasous the Great, and particularly of Oustas the Usurper. It is a transcript of many observations recorded in his journals, at Gondar, Horcacamoot, and Sennaar. These black tribes inhabit a larger space of ground than all Abyssinia and Nubia together. They encircle the whole western length of the former country, from 11 to 16 degrees north latitude: join the Galla † on the south, and coast down

* Wild Arabs of the nomad kind.

† The *Galla* are a powerful, numerous and barbarous people, originally from the heart of Africa, which appeared on the eastern frontiers of Abyssinia, about the middle of the 16th century, and has gradually got possession of all its southern provinces.

the White River to Sennaar, where they rule under the name of Fungi. To the north of Abyssinia they are mixed with Arabs, the Beja, and the Belowé; in which quarter they are called Dubena. The same race seems to exist in the ridge of mountains to the east of the Tigré, under the name of Doba. All the nations, on the limits of the tropical rains, are more intermixed than those to the west of Habbesh. The Beja, by Edrisi called Boja, are a shepherd, or wandering tribe, in the mountainous range north of Souakem; the Taka Hallanga seem to be of the same nation; but there is strong probability in favour of the opinion which identifies the Belowé with the Albanim, a race of degenerate Christians.

In short, all the nations, which dwell from the southern border of Egypt to Habbesh, are either Arabs, aboriginal Ethiopians, now confined to the mountains, or Shankala blacks, also aboriginal, but distinguished by language and colour from the other two. The languages are, Arabic, Bejan, and Shankala; of the two last of which we have no complete specimen. Perhaps in the Taka or Bejan we might trace the language of ancient Egypt, and discover some vestiges of the great intercourse which once subsisted between these two countries.

I. After Mazaga, the low country peopled by the Dubeno Shankala, we enter *Tigré*, the ancient seat of the Abyssinian monarchy. This province is very extensive and mountainous. On its north-east corner, along the shore, is what is called the territory of the Midre-bahar-nagash, or Prince of the sea-coast. In better ages, this district contained Arkîko and Masuah, the only convenient harbour possessed by Habbesh, first seized by the Turks in the unfortunate reign of king Menas, and now subject to a Näibe of Begla origin, a disgrace to human nature, and to Abyssinia in particular. The Shankala pitch their tents, and drive their cattle along the Mareb. Tigré is bounded by the territory of the Baharnagash, that is by the river Mareb on the E. and the river Tacazzé on the W. It is about 120 miles broad from E. to W. and 200 long. It is divided into the following portions, which are by no means equal to one another, nor yet ascertained in geographical order.

After the territories of the Baharnagash, whose capital is Dobarwa, come the districts of, 1. Axum, 2. Adet, 3. Af-

mecuonen, 4. Agamia*, 5. Amba Sanet, 6. Torat, 7. Siré, 8. Bora, 9. Selawa, 10. Enderta, 11. Taderar, 12. Tamben, 13. Garalta, 14. Hagaray, 15. Membarta, 16. Nâdera, 17. Saharta, 18. Senafe, 19. Bet Abba Garima, 20. Bur laali, 21. Bur tahti, 22. The Doba country, the natives of which are Pagans. Some of these have been converted to Mahometanism; but the greater part remain in their ancient superstition.

II. Samen, a very mountainous region between the rivers Tacazzé and Coror; bounded by Tigré on the north, Angot on the east, Amhara on the south, and Begemder and Dembea on the west, is about 80 miles long, and 30 at its greatest breadth. This country includes the kingdom of Lasta; the districts of Gouliou, Wâg, Tsamâ, Tsera, which belong to the Agows; Wazirât, Dehaana, and several more, possessed by mountaineers, who are often rebellious and independent. Samen has native chiefs, who acknowledge as their superior the governor of Tigré, Enderta, or Begemder, by turns, as suits their own interest or inclination. As this hilly region is of great service to its possessor, when at war with his neighbours, it is the cause of perpetual quarrels between the adjacent governors. Ras Michael, governor of Tigré, wrested his office and life from Woldo of Enderta, chiefly on this account; and long maintained a bitter enmity against Ayo, and his son, Mariam Barea, governors of Begemder, which, in the end, proved fatal to the latter of these noblemen. Lasta has a celebrated defile among its mountains, called the pass of Tchetchico, before which many Abyssinian armies have perished.

III. Begemder, a rich and valuable province, bounded on the north by Balessan, a district adjoining to Samen; on the east by Lasta and Angot; on the south by Amhara; and on the west by Dembea. Its principal districts are, 1. Andabet, 2. Atcana, 3. Dabr, 4. Estê, 5. Guna, 6. Koma, 7. Maket, near Angot, 8. Meshalamia, 9. Nefas-mautcha, 10. Samada, 11. Tsama, 12. Wain-daga, 13. Wudo. It is

* For an account of Agâmia or Agowma, Tamben, or Temben, Enderta, Axum, Bet Abba Garima, and other districts of Tigré, see Lord Valentia's Travels, Vol. III. passim.

about 180 miles, at its greatest length, and 60 in breadth. Lasta is often included in this province.

IV. Amhâra, the region which gives language, manners, and customs to the modern Abyssinians. It is bounded by Begemder on the north; Angot on the east; Walaka and Marrabet on the south; and the Nile on the west. The Woolo and Wutchilo Gallo hem it in on the south and east; these savages having been allowed to take possession even of Angot and Walaka, formerly in the centre of the Abyssinian empire. Amhara is about 120 miles long from E. to W. and about 40 broad.

The districts are, 1. Akamba, 2. Ambasele, once a state-prison, 3. Anbasît, 4. Armonem, 5. Atronsa Mariam, a celebrated church in the better ages of the kingdom, 6. Bedabedje, 7 Barārā, 8. Batshata, 9. Bedagedal, 10. Dada, 11. Dadje, 12. Demah, 13. Ephrata, 14. Ewarza, 15. Feresbahr, 16. Ganeta Gergis, 17. Geshe-ber, 18. Grumghe, 19. Ghel, 20. Gheshe, 21. Amba-Geshen, sometimes called Amba-israel, the prison of the Ozoros, or princes, 22. Hagara-christos, 23. Kerna-mariam, 24. Kisarya, 25. Laikueytâ, 26. Tâtakueyta, 27. Mecana-selassē, 28. Malza, 29. Shegla, 30. Tabor, 31. Tedubaba, or Tedbaba Mariam, 32. Walsa, 33. Ward, 34. Wagada, 35. Wanzeggir, 36. Zoramba. To these may be added *Walaka*, a low, flat, and narrow district between the rivers Geshen and Samba, S. of Amhara.

Of these districts, which are given from Mr Ludolf's history on the authority of Gregory, a well informed monk of Hagara-christos, some are very remarkable, and often mentioned in the annals of Abyssinia. Mecana-selasse, Tedbaba Mariam, Ganeta Georgis, and Atronso-Mariam were once four of the most celebrated and wealthy churches in Ethiopia. They were the principal objects of royal bounty during the reigns of Zera Jacob and his successors, till the reign of David III. All these, and many others, were laid in ruins in the calamitous war of Gragnē, which began when the Portuguese embassy left the country in A. D. 1526.

V. Shoa, a province, to the S. of Amhara, having Walaka between it and Amhara. Shoa is small and mountainous, and now nearly independent of Habbesh. That which follows is a list of provinces now lost to Abyssinia, of which

the names and inhabitants are entirely changed; and therefore deserve to be mentioned only in order to illustrate the former history of the country given in books.

1. Angot on the east side of Amhara, bordering with the Doba and Taltal, barbarous tribes near the Red Sea. This region is occupied by the Bertuma Galla, and their chief Guangoul. It once had many beautiful and ancient churches, some of which, as well as other curious particulars relating to the province, are described in the valuable journal of Alvarez, secretary to the Portuguese embassy to Ethiopia, Anno 1520—1526. No European traveller has since that time visited Angot Amhara, or Shoa. The embassy went through Angot and Amhara to find David III. at the fair of Adel, 1520. It followed the king into Guragé, Fatigàr, and several of the southern provinces.

To Angot we may add Bugna, a district on the east of it; and proceed to

2. Dawaro, a large province, bordering on Adel, and separated from Angot and Dancali by the Hanazo, a river which falls into the bay of Zeila. On the north-west of Dawaro was Gedm, a desert and hilly region running parallel to the Hanazo and opposite to Angot; on its south-west was Gan; and on its south frontier Bali, on the river Hawash; a small kingdom, through which the Galla in the year 1559 entered the Abyssinian territories.

3. Westward of Gan was Ifat, a large district, bounded by Shoa and by Marrabet (a small region, south of Amhara, and in the latitude of Gedm) on the west and north; and by the river Hawash, Bali, Gan, and Dawara on the south and east.

4. Beyond the Hawash, south of Gan and Bali, lay Fatigar, a large Mahometan province, which was bounded on the south-east by Adel. Mr Bruce's map places the southern extremity of Fatigar in 7 deg. 40 min. north latitude, undoubtedly on the authority of the Jesuits.

5. Westward of the southern extremity of this province, between the parallels of about 7 degrees 20 minutes, and 9 degrees north latitude, were many small kingdoms, once subject to Habbesh, and occasionally mentioned in its history; the names of which, in their order from east to west, are as follow: Gumar on the south-west of Fatigar; then Bahar-

gamo, or Bargamo; Suf-gamo, or Suggamo; Buzama, Cambat, and Hadea; to the north of which four last were Wedge, Alamalè, Mugar, Gombo, Ganz, and Guraguē. West of Hadea is Gingiro, and on its northern border is Caffa, then Narea; and, proceeding still towards the Nile, Shat, Zet, Contch; and *Gafat*, close on the Nile, opposite to Damot. West of Gafat is Godera, or Gooderoo; to the north-west of which is Bizamo.

All this vast tract of country is now filled by the Boren and Bertuma Galla*; and consequently accessible to no European. Caffa, Narea, and Gingiro still subsist as independent states; and the two first profess a corrupted kind of Christianity. That part of Mr Bruce's map, which relates to the lost Abyssinian provinces, is compiled chiefly from those of Tellez and Ludolf, assisted by accounts which he received in Habbesh from Galla and Agow natives, and from Mahometan traders, who still cross these wild regions in their way to the south of Africa.

VI. Damot, a province which the Jesuits have placed south of the Nile, in the country of the Galla, but which Mr Bruce describes more accurately as the eastern division of the tract which is encircled by the river; divided from Begemder, Amhara, and Shoa by the Nile issuing from the lake of Dembea; surrounded by the river on the south, and parted from Gojam by the mountainous ridge of Litchambara. It is bounded by the river Temci on the E. by the river Gult on the W. by the Nile on the S. and by the mountains of Amid-amid on the N. It is about 40 miles from N. to S. and 20 from E. to W.; it is a very hilly but fertile region, inhabited chiefly by Galla, whom Yasous the Great brought over the Nile from Gooderoo to defend the frontier against their countrymen.

VII. Gojam, or more properly Agow-midré. This beautiful and extensive territory, comprehends a large portion of the Abyssinian dominions. It is divided from Damot by the range of Aformasha and Litchambara; and reaches on the north-west to Kuara and the country of the Shankala. On the south-west and south it is bounded by the Nile. Of this country and its inhabitants, the Agows, Mr Bruce gives a

* Eastern and Western Galla.

particular description, which, as it was made by an eye witness, the only one who ever visited Gojam with an intention to discover and observe, may be reckoned the most curious and accurate that occurs in the works of any traveller.

VIII. Dembea. This province comprehends all the country that lies around the lake. On the east it includes Foggora, Dara, and Alata; on the north-east Gondar, the metropolis, and the rich district beneath it; on the south-west, the district of Bed (the plain barren country) and, on the west, the lands around Waindaga and Dingleber. It is extremely fertile, and governed by an officer, called Dembea-Cantiba, who levies from it the Hatze Kolla, a quantity of the finest flour for the use of the king's household*.

IX. Kuara, a wild district, lying west of the lake of Dembea, and bordering on Fasuclo, and the country of the Shankala. It was an ancient conquest from the Arabs, and in honour of the activity of the general who gained it, obtained the privilege of sendic and nagareet, (the colours and kettle-drum) the insignia of provincial dignity; but its governor has no vote in council. The queen, in Mr Bruce's time, was a native of Kuara; and her relations formed a turbulent, ambitious faction, under the title of Kuaragna.

X. Walkait, Tzagade, and Woggora are three low provinces north of the lake of Dembea. The first of these is an unwholesome district, often used as a state prison. Tsegade and Woggora, particularly the latter, are excellent corn countries. Ras-el fil, of which Mr Bruce was appointed governor, is a Mahometan wild district, the most northerly territory belonging to the Abyssinians, and copiously described in his Travels.

These are all the provinces which the kings of Abyssinia ever possessed. Though now diminished into an ordinary kingdom, Habbesh, under proper government, might still be the first of African monarchies, and promote, with Christian benevolence, the civilization of an extensive and unfortunate continent.

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* The Galla brought over the Nile, have possessions in Damot and Gojam, which reach to the south of the lake of Dembea. The tribe called Djawi inhabits the district on the Nile called Maitsha, of which baba is the capital, next to Gondar the largest city in Abyssinia. Galla titles are gaining ground in Habbesh.

PREFACE,

TO THE

HISTORY OF ABYSSINIA.

THE kingdom of Habbesh, as it is called by the neighbouring nations, is the oldest and greatest monarchy in Africa. But the Abyssinians, like other barbarous tribes, know little of their own origin; and beyond a certain period in their annals, all is fable and ignorance. The Kebir Neguste, or book of Axum, is a romance, composed to gratify the national pride by some ill-informed and credulous monk, but the Appendix contains some fragments of truth, which enable us to discover, faintly, the ancient state of the kingdom; and to combine a few particulars relative to the gradual formation of its laws, customs, and government.

The tradition, that the Queen of Saba, who visited Solomon, lived at Axum, is an opinion which, though destitute of foundation, is universally received in Habbesh. It arose from the religious circumstances of the nation, both before and after its conversion to Christianity. At what particular time the Sabeans colonized the western side of the Red Sea we are not informed; but we know, that it was not very long before the æra of Alexander. That the Arabs had invaded the country on the south-west side of the Straits of Babelmandeb, before his time, is probable; but we hear of no large nation in the country we now write of, at a much later period than the æra above mentioned.

The ancient history of Saba or Hamyar is acknowledged

by the Arabs themselves to be very obscure. We find their accounts of it in Pococke's excellent treatise on their national origins. The hints, translated by Pococke, are faintly illustrated by the accounts of that region in Agatharcides and Arrian. The writings of Moses, indeed, give us the names of the tribes, which first peopled the south of Arabia; the merchandize and riches of Sheba and Saba, the most eminent of the Cushite tribes*, are frequently mentioned by the prophets; and the embassy of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon is generally known. Agatharcides, who lived under the ninth Ptolemy, gives us a long and very instructive detail of the Sabean government, trade, and riches. In the time of the Emperor Trajan, the kingdom still flourished; but, in the age of Justinian, the name of Hamyar had supplanted, at least amongst foreigners, the ancient one of Saba.

In ages still later, the Cushites, near the Indian Ocean, were called by the Greeks Ἰνδοί, a name which has led authors into many errors. The kingdom of Hamyar, or of the Homeritæ, in the S. W. side of the peninsula, is represented in church histories, as being often at variance with that of Habbesh, then formed into a powerful state.

Hadramout, Saba, and Hamyar, were anciently separate states. At length, however, they became united in one monarchy; and the Jewish religion gained such influence over the minds of the Hamyiarite kings, that they abandoned the worship of the sun and stars, their native religious rites, for the Mosaic faith. The same influence extended to their colony, the Abyssinians, on the other side of the gulf; and it is to this circumstance that we must impute the Jewish opinions and fictions current in that country.

The kings of Hamyar, in Yemen, were called Tobbâ, a word signifying Successor, and equal in sense to Chalif. The Arabs reckon 43 of these from Kahtan, or Joctan, the son of Eber, to Dhu Jadan. We must consider their list as made up at random, of the names of celebrated princes, who had occasionally appeared in the history of Hamyar, and had

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* The Beni Cush, and Beni Joctan or Beni Saba, were early united by conquest. The Hamyarites arose chiefly from the Beni Joctan.

some particularity by which they survived the oblivion which time had thrown over the rest. Towards the end, the list is, as usual, more authentic. Dhu Nowas, the 43d king of Hamyar, was so addicted to Judaism, that he persecuted, in a very barbarous manner, all who would not profess that religion. He lived in the time of the Emperor Justin, and Ariat, or Hawaryat Negus of Axum. Ariat, being a Christian, entered Arabia to revenge the wrongs of Christianity; and made himself master of Hamyar and Sanaa, its capital, which the Ethiopian kings governed by deputies 72 years.

Under the viceroy Mashruk, the son of the Negus Abreha Elashram, Yemen revolted from the Abyssinians, under Seif Ibn Dhi Yazan, a Hamyarite, assisted by the arms of Anushirwan, king of Persia. The Persians killed this prince soon after, and Anushirwan took possession of all Yemen, which was governed by Persian Satraps, till the Bazan, the last of these, turned Mahometan, and it fell under the Chalifs.

The authentic modern history of Abyssinia commences at a much later period than the time of Mahomed. But these particulars have been mentioned to account for two remarkable facts; the prevalence of Jewish manners, and Persian customs, in modern Habbesh; circumstances which have not failed to introduce peculiar and disgraceful corruptions of Christianity, among an ignorant people, since the era of their conversion, A. D. 333; between which and the reign of Amda Sion, A. D. 1268, is a long interval of total obscurity.

The particular customs of Abyssinia must be gathered from history at large; the intention of this sketch is only to exhibit, from Ethiopic MSS. and other good authorities, a short view of the Abyssinian constitution, such as it appears to have been in the better days of the empire; to enumerate the ceremonies used at the coronation of the king, the principal officers of state, and some arrangements practised in the court and the camp, which throw light on the character of the nation.

What may be called, in familiar language, the etiquette and costume of the Abyssinian court, is of Persic origin. It was borrowed in early times from Hamyar, then subject to the Persians, by the sovereigns of Axum, who strove to emulate

the magnificence and retired majesty of the *Great King*. But the Abyssinians choose rather to ascribe these customs to Solomon, whose son, Menilec, they vainly account the parent of their royal family. The first Christian missionaries, finding these and other Jewish traditions confirmed in the country, chose to respect them rather than refute them. Circumcision, the doctrine of clean and unclean meats, and many other Jewish rites and ceremonies are therefore part of the religion of the Abyssinians at this day.

"We write (says the author of the MS. chronicle already described) the law and custom of the kingdom, or government of Ibn Hakim, or Menilec, the son of Solomon. With him came the 12 doctors of the law, that form the right hand bench (kanya umber) in judgment." He next mentions the other officers of eminence which came along with this prince; such as the master of the horse, high chamberlain, and he who carried the Ten Commandments and holy water. He adds, that after the *falasha*, or separation of the Abyssinian Jews from the Christians, that the kings appointed the posterity of the Levites, then converted, to be judges in their temporal courts.

The writers on laws and customs all pretend to give the names of the modern offices, which were, as they say, introduced by Menilec; but they vary so much amongst themselves, that it is impossible to reconcile their accounts. Without troubling the reader with the derivation, we shall state some particulars of the national ceremonies. And first, with respect to

The KING.—He is chosen by the principal officers in the army, and the strongest party at court. There is no preference given to birthright, legitimacy, or rank, except that he must be descended of the royal family, and unmutilated in his person. He is, by the constitution, absolute master of the lives and property of his subjects; is approached with prostration, and still affects as much as possible the secluded majesty of the kings of Parthia, once sovereigns of Arabia Felix. He never appears in public but on horseback; wears white robes, and a diadem of white muslin over his long hair; sits in an alcove of lattice-work near the council when assembled, and sends his vote to the board by a particular officer.

When a king dies, and the succession is not disputed, he

is usually coffined before the proclamation of the next. The body is thus brought into a large hall of the palace; the queen and royal family, with the principal courtiers, make immoderate and frantic exclamations, and an ostentatious show of grief; the whole city is in mourning; the people cut their hair, and go neglected. The young king, often a child, is then brought into the zefan bet, or banqueting room; the priests, judges, and nobles, who happen to be near, attend; they spread carpets on the floor, and place him on the throne; the kees hatze, or king's almoner, who represents the priest who officiated at the Jewish coronations, pours olive oil, from a horn, on his head; and the serach masri, or chamberlain, crowns him, with these words, "****, king of kings, is dead; ****, our king liveth; his we were, who is dead; his we are, who is alive. Mourn ye for the dead, and rejoice for the living." At this the iteagerd, appointed female mourners, raise a shriek of lamentation; while the nobles, on the contrary, shout for joy; exclaiming, Long live King ****! and, prostrating themselves, kiss his hand.

During the performance of this ceremony, the outer square of the palace is filled with the household troops. When it is finished, the body of nobles leave the presence-chamber, and go into the square, where they find the large kettle-drums, always kept there, to announce the royal edicts. The king is then proclaimed, by beat of drum, in the same words used at the coronation; the whole multitude shout for joy; the musqueteers fire their pieces; and those who are differently armed, skirmish, in honour of the day. The news of the event are then diffused through the provinces, in the disorderly manner that they were through the metropolis.

When this burst of joy is ended, the funeral of the late king is celebrated. Such is, at least, the custom, when all is regularly and quietly conducted; but many of the kings of Habbesh find a hasty unceremonious grave. The body, being embalmed in a particular manner, by persons who follow that profession, is put into a coffin of the wanzey tree, and conducted, with great ceremony, into the vaults of some favourite church.

The young king, the nobles, and all the royal family of

either sex, join in the funeral procession. Sometimes the body is not coffined, but laid on a couch or bier, covered with very rich brocade, or cloth embroidered with gold. This is borne along, with the sendics, or royal standards, flying before it. The kettle drums sound mournfully, and at irregular intervals. One or two of the monarch's favourite steeds are next led after, richly caparisoned. Then, a number of young noblemen, and Ozoros*, follow, bearing the robes, the crown, the belt, sword, spear, and shield, of the late king; and change them often among themselves, as they proceed, to excite grief (as they express it) in the spectators. The queen, for the same purpose, sometimes carries the crown, for a considerable space, on her own head. She and her daughters, the Ozoros, and all the court ladies, with their hair cut short, and their cheeks torn with their nails, ride after the bearers of the regalia, on mules, with piercing skrieks, and the most frantic demonstrations of sorrow. The young king, his nobles, and officers, the priests with their crosses, next advance, some on horseback, and others on foot. They have their heads shaved, their clothes old and torn, and exhibit every symptom of dejection and grief. The promiscuous multitude closes the procession.

When they approach the church, the priests read a kind of service, from the Psalms of David. The coffin is then placed in the sepulchre of the kings, in presence of the royal family and the nobles; one of which last, called the Betûdet, is obliged to arrange, and bear the expences of, the whole ceremony.

By his order, the empty bier is carried back, and a person, employed to represent the late king, rides after, on one of the caparisoned steeds, drest in the royal robes, and armed with spear and shield. This was the case at the funeral of Susneus, as related by Tellez; but it appears from the MSS. and Mr Bruce's papers, that it is the custom for the Betûdet

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* Children, or relations of the king, of both sexes. In Habbesh, the king's nearest relations are always reckoned the most noble. As it is the apparent interest of every prince to promote his own kindred, these frequently hold most of the considerable offices in the kingdom.

to rig out an image drest in the royal arms and robes, to fix it on the steed, and drive him round the square before the palace. The image is called Misle, or the resemblance. The kettle-drums beat, and the royal standards wave before it. This is not done at the funeral of the king only, but also at those of the queen, ozoros, or any person of great eminence, and is usually called "burying with sendic and nagareet."

A part of the army and multitude meet the returning procession with bitter cries and ejaculations. The nobles and courtiers again appear in the presence-chamber before the king, in tears and lamentation. Then, after an address from some of the most respectable of their number, inculcating the vanity of lamenting what cannot be prevented, and what must happen to all mankind, they conclude, with congratulations and prayers, for a happy and glorious reign to the new sovereign.

The mourning is protracted, according to the royal pleasure, and even resumed afterwards, when the king thinks proper. This last is called the Tascar, or commemoration of the deceased; it is generally followed by a kind of donative to the army, which introduces a festivity not very compatible with real sorrow.

In the beginning of every reign, a great change of officers usually takes place. A few of those, who were instrumental in electing the king, retain their places, or are preferred to higher. But no European court changes its servants oftner than the Abyssinian, has more formality in their creation, or a greater variety of places and offices.

Every man in Habbesh is at the disposal of his sovereign, with regard to person and property; but the crown makes no violent use of its power in that respect. Promotion to offices is equally the king's right in Britain and Abyssinia; and a man may be displaced, and yet enjoy his *goult*, or lands; though, in a dependent court of judicature, such as remains to be described, it is easy for the sovereign to condemn a great officer, and to take away both his life and property.

Numbers of respectable people enjoy lands, in the provinces, from father to son, without being deprived of them

by the court*. But the governors, who resemble the feudal barons of the Gothic age in Europe, having full power, in civil, military, and judicial affairs, often strip the provincial inhabitants of their fortunes, to bestow them on their own favourites. There are not, indeed, in Abyssinia, many instances of grants of lands *in perpetuum*, but there is a *consuetudinary and tacit prescription*, which answers the same purpose, unless defeated by injustice or rapacity. The form of a royal grant is as follows; proclamation, by nagareet, being the symbol of investiture:

"We (or I), Melec Segued (for instance), king of kings, son of Menas, king of Ethiopia, of the line of David, give, as a feof, (goult) to our servant or slave (the word is gebra, and signifies both), the land of **** (services are sometimes mentioned); and command this to be written in the book of the treasury."

Grants to the church are intended to be perpetual; and many of these, from old kings, are to be found in the Appendix to the book of Axum; which, though expressed in legal form, are probably all forgeries. An authentic royal grant, of a very curious kind, from Susneus to his brother Ras Sela Christos, will be given in the history of that prince.

The beat of drum, which infeofs the future possessor, has been improperly enough employed to ratify articles of religion. Every new king, abuna, and itchegué, (these two last are the primate of Ethiopia, and the grand-prior of all the monasteries), are called upon to declare their sentiments with regard to certain religious opinions, which have long divided the Ethiopic clergy. These sentiments, when given, are proclaimed by beat of drum; while the opposite party retires in great indignation, exclaiming, "Will ye adjudge the faith, like lands or moveables!"

In very remote times, the kings of Habbesh, like their ancestors, the kings of Saba, were seen only by a few great persons, and their own women and slaves. When war ob-

* All who have lands, are obliged to join the governor of the province in his military expeditions, with their servants and kindred.

liged them to take the field against their enemies, this custom was relinquished very slowly; and traces of it remain at this day. Amda Sion, about the year 1300, fought at the head of his own army against the Moors; nor was this the first instance of an Abyssinian king exposing his person to the eyes of the world. Zera Jacob, the next prince of any note, affected the majesty of the ancient retirement; and built a palace, with apartments secretly connected with one another, at Debra Berhan, a church at present within the precincts of Gondar. He was approached only by the priests and menial domestics of his chamber; though, when he chose, he appeared on horseback with great splendour and ceremony. David III. the unfortunate prince in whose reign the Portuguese entered Habbesh, and the kingdom was destroyed by the Mahometans, was the last monarch who displayed the magnificence of a king of kings. An account of him may be found in the journal of the embassy, written by Alvarez, which exhibits the last unclouded view of Abyssinian splendour.

The provinces, in those days, were never intrusted, for any length of time, to the same governor. To prevent rebellion, the crown frequently changed its officers, and nominated others more dependent on its bounty. It divided the empire into very small districts, and over each of these appointed a person, who was too much a slave of the court to think of independence. Such was the policy of Zera Jacob, and of all the princes before the Mahometan conquest: to an opposite system of government Abyssinia may ascribe its present miseries.

During the fair season of the year, the Abyssinian kings were always in the field. The order of their camp was so established by ancient use, that in every place it assumed the same appearance, and regular form. It is said, that even their palaces and towns were modelled according to the plan which was followed in the field. Their household was very numerous; and the members of it distinguished by badges that indicated their respective stations. The principal of these were,

1. The *Serach Maseri*, or chamberlain, who sets the crown on the king's head; sees his apartments properly ordered; and awakens him early in the morning, by his ser-

vants cracking their whips around his tent or palace. The badge is a whip made of a thong from a bull's hide. This is called maseri, and tzerah means the closet or chamber.

2. The *Tsewa*, or *Tsa-sargui*, or, as he is now called, the Rak maseri, who provides the king's bread, and manages that part of the revenue which relates to it. His badge is also a thong, from which he has the name of Maseri. Rak, or Arak, signifies the server of a table.

3. The *Daj-kelbas*, who wore in former times a gold ring, or circle, called belul: His office was to bring the king's fruit and drink. At present the chief butler is called *Shúm mes*, "the master of the mead."

4. *Besut Eger*. The officer who spreads carpets on the ground, beneath the throne, and in solemn processions, which is a mark of honour always attended to. He also keeps the vestments and furniture of the chapel-royal.

5. The *Negus Hazebi*, steward, or general superintendant of the household. His office is now divided amongst a number of persons amenable to the Rakmaseri, and Azajes.

6. The *Lik Soj*, or *Baal-ambel-ras* (corruptly called *Palambaras*), the master of the horse. His office is to make the pages lead along the king's steeds, adorned with gold trappings, when the court is marching: the insignia are a gold saddle and bridle.

7. The *Hazgue* or *Lik Magwass*, who has the charge of the king's mule, an office of great honour. The negus rides usually on that animal; making a point never to alight while out of doors, except on extraordinary occasions. He even rides into the presence chamber, to the foot of his throne. This officer is also called *Aisenaf*; the badge is a mule's bridle, adorned with gold.

8. The *Lik-matsan*, who wears a cotton robe, ornamented with gold. He has the charge of the royal wardrobe.

9. The *Delcame*, or *Jan-bet-tabaki*. This was the commander of the king's guard, who stood in great numbers, with spears in their hands, around the tents, and prohibited all access to any except those who had a right to enter.

10. The *Lik Diakonat*, or chief of the deacons. This priest, in later times, was called the *Acab Saat*, or keeper of the hour, because he intimated to the king the proper time for attending divine service. He is still the third ec-

clesiastic in Ethiopia ; and, under the Abuna, is head of all the secular clergy.

11. The *Kees Hatze,* or almoner. This priest is the royal chaplain, and anoints the Negus at his coronation. He is still elected; and often supplants the *Acab Saat* in the confidence of his master.

12. The *Tsafat Azazi,* or secretary. There are usually two appointed; one as historiographer, and another for public business. They are frequently monks, and have too often the prejudices and ignorance of that order. The register of royal grants and revenues is called the *deftar.*

The Ethiopians pretend that these twelve offices were the household which accompanied Menilec from Jerusalem ; consequently it follows that they are esteemed very honourable.

In the fourteenth century, while the country was yet undivided, each of these had a numerous company of servants attached to it ; and the crown revenues, which were paid mostly in kind, were parcelled amongst them. The governors of the provinces generally belonged to some of these *bets,* or houses, as they were called ; and the guards were divided among them. In the reigns of Amda Sion, Zera Jacob, and even of David III. the modern aristocracy was quite unknown.

The Acab Saat and Keese Hatze, with their deptera, or singing deacons, alone had easy access to the king. The royal apartments were so constructed as to have their tents close joined to them on the one side, and those of the women on the other. A wide circumference was railed in, and hung all around with mandalot, chequered curtains, which completely hid the pavilions from the camp. About twelve gates were made in this railing, at which stood the guards, relieving one another by alternate warding and watching.

Besides the guards (jan-bet-tabakotch) there were multitudes of eunuchs (jan-darbotch) and pages (dakik tserach), whose office was to attend on the women, and perform menial services within the palace.

After the reign of Baeda Mariam, a considerable but gradual change took place in the constitution.

The lowest magistrate in this country is called the SHUM, or provost of the bounds. The whole kingdom, in the time

of Amda Sion, was broken into very minute divisions, which were governed by a servant of the court, usually one who had held in it, at some period of his life, an inferior station. The Mahometan countries of Ifat, Fatigar, and Dawaro, alone deserve the name of provinces; the Midre Baharnagash was next in dignity, while Tigré, at present the largest in Habbesh, was only an inconsiderable district. Every petty governor, or shûm, was obliged to collect the men of his division, and lead them, at the end of the summer rains, to join the king. As the court wintered in Shoa, a province bordering on the Mahometans of Adel, the northern counties of Wogarra, Siré, Serawé, Tigré, and Midrebahar, furnished the remotest divisions of the royal army.

The forces or militia of a district were called tchewa, or shewa, soldiers, but oftener zamatch, or, in the plural, azimatch, campaigners, people for an expedition, from zamat, which signifies to make a campaign. The governor of each province raised these on command, and led them to the gate of the king's enclosure, around his tents, which is called, in Amharic, dadje*. He uncovered his body down to the waist, and there prostrated himself on the ground at a great distance, repeating it, till he was conducted into the royal presence, to kiss the king's hand, and offer his services, in the humblest manner. By him alone his soldiers had any access to the king, on which account he was called DADJ-AZIMATCH, the gate of the troops; and this word, now commonly pronounced KASMATI, is the modern title of all governors of provinces in Abyssinia.

All the departments of the household, guards, and kingdom, were at one time conducted by a number of officers called Gueta, in the Amharic language, a master. Those who commanded districts were named by their places, such as y-Tigre meconen, the governor of Tigre; Angotras, that of Angot; Bugna-ras, that of Bugna, and so on; but those who commanded the guards (black spearmen of the Shangalla, or of the Belowé race) were called as follows: Jan-Be-

* Dad, or dadje, signifies a gate, or door, in general. Dejashie seems to be the proper abbreviation of Dejazimatch, and Kasmati or Gusmatie, of Kan or Ganasimatch.

lowé-ras, the head of the Belowé guards; Jan-darba-ras, the head of the jan-darba, or king's spears, mostly carried by eunuchs; jan-bet-tabâki-ras, the head of the guards of the king's house. The pages, either slaves used in private, or young nobles, whose services were required on public occasions, were all called dakik, or billatenotch, boys or youths. Over these was an officer called the Billatena-gueta, master of the pages, who sometimes had greater or less command, according to circumstances.

All the pages and guards, both horse and foot, with their officers, were divided into *bets*, houses, or companies, which were usually named from the places in the camp or the palace where they had been stationed; and these names have descended to the king's regiments at this day. Thus one regiment is called *Gimja-bet*, because it was stationed at the treasury-house; another, *Werk-sacala*, because placed near the court of justice; a third is called *Ambaselé*, from its having formerly belonged to Ambasel in Amhara, once a state prison of the Ozoros; *Zefan-bet*, the regiment of the banqueting house; and so on, according to the names of the royal apartments.

The Billatāna guēta takakîn, or lesser billatana gueta, was chief of all the household servants; immediately under him was the Hadug ras, the person who governed the hadug, or keepers of the treasury, armoury, royal stores, &c. which were placed in many tents in the field, and in separate apartments in the palace. The revenue, whether paid in cattle, horses, cloth, gold, arms, or any other sort of goods, was called *gibr* *; which the Hadug ras, by his respective officers, received from the shums or kasmatis of provinces, and accounted for to the billatana gueta.

The ozoros, and many bets or companies of the king's domestics, had lands in distant parts of the kingdom, assigned for their support; hence many places occur called Tarsemba, Baaldarba, Gera Wizazir, Kanya Wizazir, &c. which occasion much confusion in describing the country.

Soon after the fall of the empire, the small districts were

* By the Mahometans called *miry* or *meery*.

united, by ambition or royal favour, into great provinces, over which a single kasmati now presides, having full power to raise its forces, collect its revenues, and administer justice as he pleases *. Lands belonging to the church and ozoros are alone exempted from his jurisdiction, and managed by the servants of the proprietors.

The king's judges are called *Azăjes;* they are six in number, having particular departments in the palace. They have a vote in civil, as well as in criminal matters. Every kasmati is also a judge, and was of old obliged to sit in the sacala, to hear causes, whatever might be their nature. In causes of consequence a full council is assembled; in ordinary matters, the sentence of the common azajes is sufficient, but an appeal is open to the king, if desired by the parties.

All the household officers were formerly created in pairs, one for the right hand, and another for the left. The troops or pages, under their direction, took their station in the camp on their respective sides of the king's tents; and the officers stood on the right and left hand of the king in public.

As the king generally elected a Billetana-gueta-takakin † for the household; so he usually appointed two BAHTWUDEDS, each of whom was his lieutenant-general over half the troops in the kingdom. The word signifies "the only gate," or, "by him alone the gate," as the army had access to the sovereign through the medium of this officer only. The Bahtwuded's office may be filled by a Kasmati, and there are certain lands and distinctions appendages of that honour. In the time of Baeda Mariam both the Bahtwudeds were killed in one day, by the Mahometans of Adel. The office was, therefore, accounted unfortunate; and, in succeeding reigns, a Ras, or Generalissimo, was appointed instead of it, with plenary power over the whole army. The name of Bahtwuded was not, however, abolished; it continues to

* This jurisdiction renders an Abyssinian governor of a province almost equal in power to a feudal baron. In fact the command of provinces is now in that country nearly hereditary

† See p. 25. for the description of this officer

be given as a title of honour to a favourite governor. Ras Michael, as well as many before his time, united the two offices in the same person.

In a full council of the nation, on business of importance, the king sits in an alcove adjoining to the council room, behind a lattice called *shek-shek*. An officer, called the Af-negus, or mouth of the king, carries to him the deliberations, and receives his answer. Some of the counsellors have a right to sit; others are obliged to vote standing. The inferior members vote first, rising in gradation to the Ras and the King.

1. *Shalakas* *, that command the principal Bets, or regiments.

2. The *Shalaka* that regulates the troops within the city.

3. The *Lik-magwass*, or master of the king's mule; an office of considerable honour.

4. The *Dedj-azaje*, or judge of the king's gate, who determines the causes of the guards.

5. The *Baal ambel ras* (Palambaras) master of the king's black horse, or cavalry.

6. The *Badjerund of the Lion-house*. It was customary to have four lions accompanying the royal camp in all its movements. The place where they were stationed was near the common prison. The overseer of this has command over the Debria bet haïts, the officers who superintend executions.

7. The *Badjerund of the Zefan bet*, or grand presence chamber, who keeps the crown, and oversees the decoration of the royal apartments. His servants, who are the actors in ceremonies and processions, are called *baal-hege*, *tsashargot*, and *iteagerd*.

8. The *Negade Ras*, head of all the strangers at Gondar, who oversees that part of the revenue arising from the taxes and customs on foreign merchandise; and regulates the Mahometan traders and traffic.

9. and 10. The *Gera azimatch* and *Kanya azimatch*, or

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* Yshah-alaka, captain of a thousand. Amh.—The list is taken from the MS. Annals of Abyssinia, Vol. IV. life of Yasous I.; and Vol. V. life of Bacuffa.

Gerasmati and *Kanasmati*, two officers, the former for the left, the latter for the right hand. The Kanasmati votes last, as being more honourable than the other. They are the two lieutenants of the Billatana gueta, or master of the household, and command the king's guards under his direction.

10. The *Billatana-gueta Takakin*, grand master of the household servants; commander in chief of the guards; and receiver-general of the revenue, which is collected by the *Hadugs*, under their Ras, from the Shums and Kasmati's in every part of the kingdom.

11. The *Zin-darba Azaje*, or judge of the eunuchs, who has jurisdiction over the body-servants; he has also the controul of those matters which concern all the menial slaves.

12. The *Tarsemba Azaje*, or Debna Wizazer, the judge of the Ozoros or Nobles. He decides affairs relating to privileges and honours, and assigns the reward given to such as have performed actions of distinction. His servants are called *Dimshasha*, from a stripe of red leather they wear around their heads.

13, 14, 15, 16. The *four Azajes*, or king's judges; two on the right, and two on the left. These are the stated bench (umber) in all ordinary causes, ecclesiastical, civil, and criminal. Two of them are called *Gera*, and *Kanya Wust Azaje*, who are the king's attorneys general in crimmal prosecutions. These are always the most eminent for experience and discernment.

17, 18. The two *Tsafat Tazazi*, secretaries, who keep the records of the kingdom, and write the annals of their sovereign. The treasury-book is called by the Abyssinians, Debdekon, and, by the Mahometans, Deftar.

19. The *Wust Azaje*, or *Rak Masery*; the officer who has the charge of superintending the king's bread, which is prepared for the household, of fine flour from Dembea. The quantity which annually comes to Gondar for that purpose is called the Hatze Kolla, king's food.

20. The *Basha*, an officer introduced by Melec Segued in imitation of the Turks, with whose customs he was obliged to become acquainted. The function, of the person so called, was to command the Mahometan musqueteers, then introduced into the household troops. He has the rank of

Kasmati, or governor; and is usually a gentleman of approved valour, who heads a division of the infantry.

21. The *Tsef-lam* of Damot (register of the cattle). This is the Kasmati; a high officer that commands the Galla, settled there by Yasous the Great. He pretends to the right of chief of all the Tchewa, or militia, which fixes his place in the grand council of the kingdom.

Gojam-Nagash (the Kasmati of Gojam), who claims the hereditary right of Melak Melakat, general of the king's generals, in consequence of which he holds this rank.

23. *Tzeflam Amhara;* the Kasmati of Amhara, who pretends that he is Beter-yarche, a patriarch; by which is meant, in Habbesh, a leading ecclesiastic, or chief man of any kind.

24. *Begemder Dadj-azimatch;* the Kasmati of Begemder, who sits in this rank, in right of his being Lik-cahenat za Warwar, chief of the clergy of Warwar, in that province.

25. *Samen-agafara,* the Governor of Samen, who takes place of the foregoing, because he was allowed to sit before Alem Segued, or Facilidas. That king was Kasmati of Samen when he came to the crown, and bestowed this honour on his province and successors.

26. *Tigre-Maconen,* the Governor of Tigre. He sits in the king's presence, in right of his being Nebr-ad of Axum, or keeper of the book of the law; an office derived from the fabulous history of Menilec. He drinks out of a golden cup.

27. The *Acab Saat,* keeper of the Hour, the highest ecclesiastical dignity in Abyssinia. The Abuna, though nominally head of the church, is the mere pageant of this priest, who intrigues at court, and leads the secular clergy in the same way that the Itchegue, to be mentioned hereafter, does the regular.

28. The *Billatana-gueta Talalac,* the lieutenant-general of the Ras, or Betwuded, who, under him, commands the troops of the whole kingdom. He is generally nominated by the Ras, and then confirmed by the king.

29. The *Ras or Betwuded**. There were formerly two

* Written Bahtwuded, or Betwuded, and pronounced Betudet.

Betwudeds; one on the right, and one on the left, who were always governors of the best provinces in the kingdom. At present, it is usual to appoint, at pleasure, the governor of Amhara, Gojam, Damot, or Begemder, Betwuded, who takes his place next to the Ras, in consequence of his title. The Ras, as in Michael's time, often unites both offices in his own person, along with the government of a principal province. But whoever is Betwuded, the Ras is his superior, and can order him to appear with his army when he pleases. The three dignities of Tigre-maconen, Betwuded, and Ras, made Michael Suhûl the greatest subject in Abyssinia.

The KING, who gives his vote last of all, by the Af-negus, from behind the Shekshek, and is swayed, in general, by the majority of his council.

Such is the order and list of the Abyssinian Council, as established at this day. But there are many governors of provinces, which are now lost to the Galla and Mahometans, whose names are found in history; and there are several who govern rich districts, that have no vote in council.

Angot, Bugna, Gedm, Dawaro, Bali, Gan, Ifat, Marrabet, Fatigar, Wedje, Gumar, Bahar-gamo, Suf-gamo, Buzama, Cambat, or Hadea, Gombo, Ganz, Mugar, Gurague, Gafat, Narea, Shat, Zet, Contsh, and Bizamo, were once all subject to Habbesh. The titles of some of the governors were the Angot-ras, Bugna-ras, Dawaro-Grade, (the people Mahometans,) Gan-shum, Ifat Walasma, Fatigar-asgua, Gedma-katen, Gurague-shum, Gafat-shum, Cambat, or Hadea Nagash, and Nareanagash, who to this day maintains a kind of alliance with Abyssinia. These provinces were the scene of the greatest exploits and final disgrace of the Abyssinian name. The court, in those times, resided in Shoa; the Tseflam of which, Amha-Yasous, has now rendered himself nearly independent, and has no seat in the council. Guragué and Gafat are still in subjection to the governor of Damot, who commands the Eleman and Densa Galla, and the other inhabitants of these regions. Walaka, a province between Shoa and Amhara, is filled with the Woolo Galla, by the connivance of the Shoa-tseflam.

The governor of Dembea is called *Cantiba;* and it is an appanage of the king, or Ras's *Fitaurari*, an officer to be

mentioned afterwards. *Kuara*, to the west of the lake of Dembea, and *Walkayt* and *Tsegadé*, to the north of it, have governors, with the title of Kasmati and Nagareets, (kettle-drums,) the insignia of every separate province; but these Kasmatis have no vote in the council of the nation.

There is an officer who superintends the revenues of Agow-midre, called *Agow-miziker*, recorder of the Agows; and another, who manages the affairs of Maitsha, the country of the Djawi Galla, whose title is *Ibaba-azaje*.

Having reckoned up the principal men in office, in the Abyssinian government, it may be proper to add, that the general name for the governors of provinces is *Meconen*, or judges, all of them posssessing judicial powers; that of the officers, who have command, but not jurisdiction, is *licaonte*, chiefs or leaders. The superiors of the churches, the Itchegué, or grand-prior of the monks, the Acab Saat, Kes-hatze, and the ordinary judges, with all the great officers of the palace, are included under the latter denomination.

The superior of the clergy, belonging to a particular church, is called *Alaka*; he is appointed by the crown. The head of the king's own clergy, who used to attend him in the field, and have their church or tent erected near his enclosure in the camp, is called *Lik-debtera*. The Abuna formerly attended the king in his campaigns; and claimed a considerable share of jurisdiction, in matters regarding the lands and vassals of the church, as well as in affairs of religion. Now, however, his power is closely restricted to cases which are provided for by the written laws of the church; and the king makes his Hadug-ras keep a person in the house of the primate to levy a tribute on his revenues.

The ceremonies performed at the creation of Abyssinian great officers are singular, and throw considerable light on the national character. Before the war of Adel, and the division of the empire in the reign of David III. all was splendour and ceremony. Gold wrought into chains, cups, and other articles of use and luxury, was every where common; the finest brocades, silk, and cotton cloths, were worn by the king's servants; the apartments in the palace and camp were ornamented with the most precious metals, and with beds of state, called menstaffs; they were hung with the richest Indian stuffs, and paved with the finest carpets of Persia. All

the great officers of the crown ate out of vessels of gold and silver; and most of their furniture displayed the utmost height of barbaric pomp.

A *Kasmati* (governor) is made in public generally at the Adebebaye, or market-place of Gondar. The servants of the king, under the direction of the Badjerund of the Zeffanbet, put around his head the Ras Werk, a circle of gold, and clothe him with the Kaftan, a white robe, sometimes lined with blue. The Abyssinian MS. mentions another gift, by the words sinomu mai, the meaning of which is uncertain, but seems to be a pitcher for water. One of the people employed in the ceremony then proclaims him, in the following manner: "Hear, hear, hear! We make our servant *** Kasmati of ——." The kettle-drums immediately beat; the trumpets are sounded; those who are present raise loud shouts of congratulation. He is then mounted on a horse of the king's splendidly caparisoned, and rides to the outer gate of the palace, where, alighting, he is admitted into the presence-chamber; and, after having prostrated himself on the ground, kisses the king's hand. He is conducted out with sendic, nagareet, and nesserkano; that is, with the royal standard flying before him, and the drums and music above mentioned.

The basha is also invested with the Ras Werk and Kaftan. He receives gold chains for his legs and arms, called amber werk and zinar, with a gold-hilted sword, and a shasha, a kind of turban, wound about his head. He is presented to the king on the throne, and allowed to sit at the foot of it, with carpets spread under his feet. He is there served with drink in a golden cup; after which, he is conducted by all the nobles and army at Gondar, in full procession, to the house allotted to his office. The musqueteers, with sendic, nagareet, and nesserkano, fire repeated peals of musquetry; and the rejoicing in this, as indeed in all cases of that nature, is noisy, and riotous beyond description.

All the great officers are invested in this manner, differing, however, in the degree of honour which is paid to their respective ranks. The tenor of the proclamation is the same. It is the perpetual custom of the king, to bestow new robes and other articles of dress, not on the nobility alone, but on every person in his court or army, who has performed any

action of note. A quantity of provisions from the palace is also bestowed at the same time. These customs are all of Persian origin.

This introduction may be properly concluded with a description of the arrangement of the camp, in the better days of the monarchy, which still continues to be imitated in modern times. The sovereigns of Habbesh, were generally, during the nine fair months of the year, in the field, engaged in war with the Mahometans, Galla, or other tribes on the frontiers of the kingdom. Long practice made encampment an easy regular matter; every part of the army knew its particular station; when the king's tent was pitched, the places of all the rest were relatively determined. In an expedition, it was usual for the king to carry his wives, household-servants, clergy, and treasures, along with him. These are mentioned together, because they were all exceedingly numerous, and formed a proportional incumbrance to the march, which was very slow, at the rate of 10 or 14 miles a-day.

An officer, called the *Fit-aurari**, always precedes an Abyssinian army. He is attended by a party of horse, or light-armed foot, who keep at the distance of two or three miles before the main body, and give intelligence of the approach of an enemy, and of the state of the country, wherever they advance. The choice of the ground for encamping is entrusted to him; in which he is guided by the circumstances of water, level, wood, and similar advantages. When these are convenient, he pitches a flag on the spot designed for the king, and measures out the ground for the inclosure of his tents. In a short time the servants come up, and erect them with great expedition; while the Billatena-gueta takakin, or master of the household, superintends the work. The greater Billatena-gueta, and the Palambaras, next assign the usual stations to the horse and foot, on the right hand or the left, behind the royal inclosure.

The whole camp is called *cattama*; and when extended in the manner that was usually done, on continuing long in

* Front of the host.

one place, it occupied a space of several miles in circumference. The king's tents, five or six in number, were placed on a little eminence, on the east side of it; the doors of them being always towards the east. The name of the place in which they stood was called margàf, which was surrounded with long pallisades, hung with chequered curtains, named *mantalot*, that completely hid the tents from the army without. In this inclosure (megardj) were twelve doors, or entrances, occupied by the guards, the principal of which looked to the east. It was known and determined at which of these certain persons should enter; for instance, the cooks at one door, the Betwudets at another, the clergy at a third, and so on, throughout the whole number. The principal gate was called the Wudunsha dadje; the names of the rest were the sargwan dadje, shalemat dadje, megardja dadje, mebleâ dadje, baaltihat dadje; which were double, one of each name on the right, and another on the left, of the principal entrance.

On the right side of the inclosure, without the gates, stood the tents of the Iteghe, or queen, with those of the ozoros and ladies of the court. When the negus had a number of wives, it was usual to divide them into tents on each side of the inclosure, which were called the gera and kanya baal tit, ladies apartments of the right and left. These were served by great numbers of eunuchs and female slaves, called melmel. On the left of the inclosure was the royal kitchen, with the tents of the cooks, (abi tsergui godana;) which were, however, often placed on both sides. Then the Billetenagetas talak, and takakin, the Badjerunds, the Tarsemba dimshasha, the Basha, and the Mecuonen, or noblemen, governors, &c. arranged their tents behind on the left side, as the two billatenas pointed out, till they reached what is called the gera phires dehrawi, or rear of the horse stationed on the left. In that rear were the tents of the Rakmasery, and before these, nearer the king's, were the tents of the darba-bet, or body guards, while not on duty. In what was called the left koulef, or inclosure, pitched the Gerasmati, with the large korban, or room for keeping the furniture of the church of Mary of Sion, which stood on his right hand, along with the tents of its debtera, or clergy. These were arranged in a line along the interior flank of the horse stationed on the

left, reaching to the fit phires zagéra, or front of the cavalry, a large space at the west end of the camp. On the exterior flank of these horse, towards the north, the Betwudet, that commanded the troops of Begemder, or rather half the forces of Ethiopia, encamped his men all around the cavalry, from the king's tents to the *fit phires*, or west end of the camp. In the left fit phires, encamped the Palambaras, as being master of the horse; and before him, nearer the east, the aisnafo dimshasha, or master of the mules. The azajes and licaonte of the left hand had their station near the church of St Mary, to the eastward of the master of the mules, where was also that of the Acab saat. Between the church and the station of the Palambaras were the abodes and shops of the lower orders, that served the army with provisions, hydromel, and similar articles of use and luxury. Great numbers of common women, artists, and idle people, had their respective places in this quarter of the camp, both on the right and left.

On the right side, behind the Iteghé, and also on her right hand, encamped the Wizazir, or branches of the royal family, viz. all the sons of the king allowed to reside in the camp; and such noblemen as were descended from the royal family by ozoros, or daughters; occupying from the Iteghé, or queen's tents, to the rear of the right hand horse. In the right koulef pitched the Kanasmati, with the large korban, or room, for keeping the furniture of the church of Baalmaskal, or the cross, which stood on his right hand with the numerous tents of its debtera, or clergy. These were pitched along the interior flank of the right hand cavalry to its fit phires, or front, a large space so called on the west side of the camp. On its exterior flank, all around on the south side, encamped the Betwudet, that governed *Gojam*, with half the troops of the empire. In the fit phires of the right hand were a body of horse, armed in the Turkish manner; to the eastward of which were the lower orders as on the other side. The azajes and licaonte of the right, with the Abuna and his clergy, had their station near the church of the holy cross.

In this arrangement of the camp, an equal distribution of the nobles and troops was made to the right hand and the left behind the king's inclosure. None of the tents project-

ed before the royal station; but a large empty space was reserved in front of it, not to be entered by any without positive orders. About two shots of a cross-bow from the eastern gate of the king's inclosure was the Saccala, a large square tent, with 12 low iron seats, six on the one side, and six on the other of a large one, breast high, which represented that of the king. Alvarez asserts, that the judges did not sit on these, but on the grass, to hear the causes before them. In the reign of David, the Betwudets were the chief judges in the Saccala, and carried the opinion of the rest to the dadje, or king's gate, whence the concluding sentence was given from behind the curtains. At present, the council is seldom full; and the judges stand at a table, in the direction of the right and left side of the empty chair at the head of it. The king's vote is brought by the At-negus from an adjacent alcove.

When the judges were assembled in the Saccala, before they proceeded to business, they began with a prayer, or hymn, said to be composed by Jared, the Abuna, under Gebramascal, about A. D. 560. After pronouncing often, in a solemn tone, and after long pauses, the word Halieluia, they chaunted these sentences:—

"From the day of vengeance, from the day of doom,
How shall the soul escape?
When the mother cannot save her child, and the earth shall surrender her prisoners,
How shall the soul escape?
When the Father shall put on the robe of retribution, and clothe himself with the garment of vengeance,
How shall the soul escape?
When the assembly shall accuse us with terrors, when our deeds shall be opened, and spread out, and all that we have done shall be read,
How shall the soul escape?
When our Lord shall sit on the Mount of Olives, on the day of the Sabbath; and all his disciples beside him; what shall annoy the people, when he shall have mercy on the poor, and on him who has done right?"

The prayer is repeated thrice by all the Azajes, who join with the Serach Massery in this preliminary formula. They then hear a kind of practical explanation of it from the same officer, after which they proceed to business. The Betwudet, or Ras, has a right to judge sitting; his lieutenant, the Billatena gueta talalac, stands. In modern times, the great officers (Meconen) seldom appear in the Saccala, where the common Azaje and Umber, with a few of the Licaonte, administer justice under the control of the king. Absolutely dependent on him for subsistence, liberty, and life, no judges in the world are more subject to the will of the monarch.

At a considerable distance beyond the Saccala, on the right and left of it, were the two prisons (Menges bet), in which the accused were kept in chains, and guarded according to the importance of the crimes with which they were charged. Near these tents, but further to the east, were those of the two Betwudets, or chief justices, on the right and left hand, having a church between them appropriated to the judge. Eastward of the church were chained four lions, in a place called Anbasa-bet, which were constantly led along when the king marched. These were a very antient part of the retinue of the sovereigns of Axum, where they were kept in the days of Cosmas Indoplaustes; and the place of the Anbasa-bet, is still distinguished in the ruins of that city. That the lion has long been accounted a symbol of power is generally known; the custom mentioned here, and the names of Anbasa Wudem, Wanag Seguid, &c. shew how much the opinion was prevalent in Ethiopia. The royal standard of Abyssinia displays the lion of the tribe of Judah, to indicate the descent of its kings from David; a fiction by which the clergy flattered the vanity of the monarch, and preserved a relic of a custom older than the æra of Christianity.

Far beyond the lions, but still in front of the king's tents, was a church, and a gabeta, or market-place appropriated to Christians, who sold there all kinds of provisions. In this they observed the distinction between clean and unclean beasts; a part of the Jewish law which is still scrupulously retained in Habbesh. All Mahometans and Infidels were excluded from this market; having a separate one for them-

selves, under the inspection of the Negadé Râs. Though the greatest and wealthiest merchants in the kingdom, they have no domestic intercourse with the Christians at this day; they live at Gondar, in the lower town, which was assigned them by Facilidas and Hannes I.; and eating or drinking with them, or of any thing which they have prepared, is reckoned equal to a renunciation of Christianity.

Such was the form of the camp in the time of David III. and his grandson Melec Segued. At this day they follow the plan of former ages, as far as occasion requires; though the whole forces and nobles of Habbesh seldom meet in one encampment. The towns were originally standing camps, having cottages raised of earth and canes to shelter the army from the rains in the wet season. The respective parts of a camp were long visible in Gondar, which was chosen by Facilidas for the winter station of his court. Claudius is said to have first erected a medin*, or fixed residence, to which he was invited by the beauties of European architecture, contrary to the will of his subjects, who considered the perpetual movement of the camp as the greatest defence against their barbarous invaders. Jacob resided at Coga; Susneus at Dancaz and Gorgora. Facilidas deserted the palace of his father, and built a house at Gondar; rendering by this Coga and Dancaz so obscure, that they are not noticed in Mr Bruce's map. Hannes and Yasous Tallak both continued in the same place, which consequently became the residence of much people, and at last the capital of the whole kingdom†.

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* MS. Annal. Abyss. Vol. II. life of Claud.

† For the order of the camp in the time of David, see Viaggio nella Ethiop. di Don F. Alvarez. in Ramusio's Collect. cap. 120—128.; and Ethiop. MS. pref. to the Chronicle, which, along with detached hints in the Annals, proves that it is still observed. On the household, see MS. pref. to the Chronicle; the MS. appendix to the lives of Baeda Mariam, and Iscander; the lives of the kings in the MS. Annals, passim; and Ludolf's Ethiopic history and dictionaries.—E.

TRAVELS

TO DISCOVER

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE.

BOOK III.

ANNALS OF ABYSSINIA, TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL *; CONTAINING THE HISTORY OF ABYSSINIA, FROM THE RESTORATION OF THE LINE OF SOLOMON TO THE DEATH OF SOCINIOS, AND THE DOWNFALL OF THE ROMISH RELIGION IN ABYSSINIA.

ICON AMLAC.

From 1268 to 1283.

Line of Solomon restored under this Prince—He continues the Royal Residence in Shoa—Tecla Haimanout dies—Reasons for the Fabrication of the supposed Nicene Canon.

ALTHOUGH the multiplicity of names assumed by the kings of Abyssinia, and the confusion occasioned by this custom, have more than once been complained of

* The sources from which the following history of Abyssinia are drawn, have been pointed out already. But though it is eas-

in the foregoing sheets, we have here a prince that is an exception to the practice, otherwise very general. Icon Amlac is the only name by which we know the first prince of the race of Solomon, now fully restored to his dominions, after a long exile his family had suffered by the treason of Judith. The signification of his name is, "Let him be made our sovereign;" and it is apparently that which he took upon his inauguration or accession to the throne: his name of baptism, with the popular or by-name, are therefore both lost.

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to transfer, into our language, the principal facts in the Habbesine histories, it is no ordinary task, to give an idea of the style in which these are composed. The plan of them is taken from the Jewish Chronicles; and the writers, being generally churchmen, fill up their pages with long pious declamations; texts of Holy Writ; and trivial, nay sometimes blasphemous, comparisons of their kings and generals, to the principal characters in the Scriptures and sacred legends. After the fictitious, or at least imperfect, list of kings, who preceded Icon Amlac, which is copied into every chronicle, the Abyssinians enter on the kings of Shoa, of the antient line, restored about the middle of the thirteenth century. But, excepting the Adeline war of Amda Sion, a large fragment of which is preserved, and translated in this volume, and the reigns of Zera Jacob, and Baeda Mariam, very few particulars are known respecting the intermediate kings. The annals of these princes were destroyed with the churches, and most of the antient records of the kingdom, by the Mahometans of Adel, in the disastrous reign of David III. The history of Amda Sion's war with the Infidels occupies 22 pages in quarto, closely written, in the MS. volume. Though no date is added, it seems to have been composed under the reign of Zera Jacob. It is not divided into chapters; but the beginnings of the paragraphs are written with red ink, a usual Abyssinian ornament. It concludes with a prayer for him that has written, and caused it to be written; and that he who shall read or translate it may have his name written by the Lord in the book of life for ever and ever. The rest of the facts are taken from the smaller chronicle; from which also is extracted the account of Icon Amlac and Igba Sion.—E.

Although now restored to the complete possession of his ancient dominions, the king was too wise to leave all at once his dutiful kingdom of Shoa, and return to Tigré. He continued to make Tegulat, the capital of Shoa, the seat of his empire, and reigned there fifteen years.

In the 14th year of Icon Amlac, his great benefactor, Abuna Tecla Haimanout, founder of the order of monks of Debra Libanos, and restorer of the royal family, died at that monastery in high reputation, and at a very advanced age. He was the last Abyssinian ordained Abuna; and this sufficiently shews the date of that canon, of which I have already spoken, falsely ascribed to the council of Nicea.

Though Le Grande, and some others, have pretended to be in doubt at what time, and for what reason, this canon was made, I think the reason very plain, which fixes it to the time of Tecla Haimanout, as well as shews it to be a forgery of the church of Ethiopia, no doubt with the counsel and advice of this great statesman, their Abuna Egypt was fallen under the dominion of the Saracens; the Coptic patriarch, and all the Christians of the church of Alexandria, were their slaves or servants; but the Abyssinians were free and independent, both in church and state, and a mortal hatred had followed the conquest from a variety of causes, of which the persecution of the Christians in Egypt was none of the least. As it was probable that these reasons would increase daily, the consequence which promised to follow inevitably, was, that the Abyssinians would not apply to Alexandria, or Cairo, for a metropolitan sent by the Mahometans, but would choose a head of their own, and so become altogether independent of the chair of St Mark. As they were cut off from the rest of the world by seas, and deserts almost inaccessible, as they wanted books,

and were every day relaxing in discipline, total ignorance was likely to follow their separation from their primitive church, and this could not end but in a relapse into Paganism, or in their embracing the religion of Mahomet.

The prohibition of making any of their countrymen Abuna, secured them always a man of foreign education and attachments to fill this important station, and thus secured the dependence of the Abyssinians upon the patriarch of Alexandria. This is what I judge probable; for I have already invincibly shewn, that it is impossible this canon could be one of the first general Council; and its being in Arabic, and conceived in very barbarous terms, sufficiently evinces that it was forged for some particular purpose.

IGBA SION.

From 1283 to 1312.

Quick Succession of Princes—Memoirs of these Reigns defective.

To Icon Amlac succeeded Igba Sion, and after him five other princes, his brothers, Bahar Segued, Tzenaf Segued, Jan Segued, Haseb Araad, and Kedem Segued, all in five years. So quick a succession in so short a period seems to mark very unsettled times *. Whether it was a civil war which brought these reigns to so speedy a conclusion, or the Moorish states in Adel had grown in power, and fought successfully against them, we do not know. One thing only is certain, that no molestation was offered by the late royal family of Lasta, who continued in peace, and firm in the observation of their treaty. A civil war among the brothers was probably the occasion of the quick succession of so many princes; and that in the time when the kingdom was weakened by this calamity, the states of Adel, grown rich and powerful, had improved the opportunity, and seized upon all that territory from Azab to Melinda, cutting off the Abyssinians entirely from the sea-coast, and from an opportunity of trading directly with India from the ports situated upon

* The reason why nothing more except the names and respective reigns of these princes is known, is owing to the large defect already mentioned in the national history. Their names, reigns, and deaths, are from the small chronicle.—E.

the ocean. And my reason is, that, in a reign which speedily follows, we find the kingdom of Adel increased greatly in power, and Moorish princes from Arabia established in little principalities, exactly corresponding with the southern limits of Abyssinia, and placed between them and the ocean; and we see, at the same time, a rancour and hatred firmly rooted in the breasts of both nations, one of the causes of which is constantly alleged by the Abyssinian princes to be, that the Moors of Adel were anciently their subjects and vassals, had withdrawn themselves from their allegiance, and owed their present independence to rebellion only.

To these princes succeeded Wedem Araad, their youngest brother, who reigned fifteen years, probably in peace; for in this state we find the kingdom in the days of his successor; but then it is such a peace, that we see it only wanted any sort of provocation from one party to the other, for both to break out into very cruel, long, and bloody wars.

AMDA SION.

From 1312 to 1342.

Licentious beginning of this King's Reign—His rigorous Conduct with the Monks of Debra Libanos—His Mahometan Subjects rebel—Mara and Adel declare War—Are defeated in several Battles, and submit.

Amda Sion succeeded his father, Wedem Araad, who was youngest brother of Icon Amlac, and came to the crown upon the death of his uncles. He is generally known by this his inauguration name; his Christian name was Guebra Mascal. His reign began with a scene as disgraceful to the name of Christian as new in the annals of Ethiopia, and which promised a character very different from what this prince preserved ever afterwards. He had for some time, privately, loved a concubine of his father, but had now taken her to live with him publicly; and, not content with commiting this sort of incest, he, in a very little time after, had seduced his two sisters.

Tegulat * (the capital of Shoa) was then the royal residence; and near it is the monastery of Debra Libanos, founded by Tecla Haimanout, restorer of the line of Solomon. To this monastery many men, eminent for learning and religion, had retired from the scenes of war that desolated Palestine and Egypt. Among the number of these was one Honorius, a Monk of the first character for piety, who since has

* The city of Wolves, or Hyænas.

been canonized as a saint. Honorius thought it his duty first to admonish, and then publicly excommunicate the king for these crimes.

It would seem that patience was as little among this prince's virtues as chastity. He immediately ordered Honorius to be apprehended, stripped naked, and severely whipped through every street of his capital. That same night the town taking fire, was entirely consumed; and the clergy lost no time to persuade the people, that it was the blood of Honorius that turned to flame, whenever it had dropped upon the ground. The king, less credulous, perhaps better informed, thought otherwise of this, and supposed the burning of his capital to be owing to the monks themselves. He therefore banished those of Debra Libanos out of the province of Shoa.

The mountain of Geshen had been chosen for the prison wherein to guard the princes of the male-line of the race of Solomon, after the massacre by Esther*, upon the rock Damo in Tigré.

It is a very steep and high rock, in the kingdom of Amhara, adjoining to, and under the jurisdiction of Shoa. Hither the king sent Philip the Itcheguè, chief of the monastery of Debra Libanos; and he scattered the rest through Dembea, Tigré, and Begemder (whose inhabitants were mostly Pagans and Jews), where they greatly propagated the knowledge of the Christian religion.

This instance of severity in the king had the effect to make all ranks of people return to their duty; and all talk of Honorius and his miracles was dropt. The town was rebuilt speedily, more magnificently than ever; and Amda Sion found time to turn his thoughts

* She had several names, as I have before said; Judith in Tigré, and in Amhara, Esther.

to correct abuses, and to efface the unfavourable impression which they had made upon the minds of his people at home, besides having gained considerable ground abroad.

It has been before mentioned, and will be further inculcated in the course of this history as a fact, without the remembrance of which the military expeditions of Abyssinia cannot be well understood, that two opposite seasons prevail in countries separated by a line almost imperceptible; that during our European winter months, that is, from October to March, the winter or rainy season prevails on the coast of the ocean and Red Sea, but that these rains do not fall in our summer (the rainy season in Abyssinia), which was the reason why Amda Sion said to his mutinous troops, he would lead them to Adel or Aussa, where it did not rain, as we shall presently observe.

The different nations that dwell along the coast, both of the Red Sea and of the ocean, live in fixed huts or houses. We shall begin at the northmost, or nearest Atbara, The first is Ageeg, so named from a small island on the coast, opposite to the mountains of the Habab, Agag, or Agaazi, the principal district of the noble or governing Shepherds, as is before fully explained, differing in colour and hair from the Shepherds of the Thebaid, living to the northward. Then follow the different tribes of these, Tora, Shiho, Taltal, Azimo, and Azabo, where the Red Sea turns eastward, towards the Straits, all woolly-headed, the primitive carriers of Saba, and of the perfume and gold country. Then various nations inhabit along the ocean, all native blacks, remnants of the Cushite Troglodytes, but who do not change their habitations with the seasons, but live within land in caves, and some of them now in houses.

In Adel and Aussa the inhabitants are tawny, and

not black, and have long hair; they are called Gibberties, which some French writers of voyages into this country say, means slaves, from Guebra, the Abyssinian word for slave or servant. But as it would be very singular that a nation like these, so rich and so powerful, who have made themselves independent of their antient masters the Abyssinians, have wrested so many provinces from them, and, from the difference of their faith, hold them in such utter contempt, should nevertheless be content to call themselves their slaves, so nothing is more true, than that this name of Gibberti has a very different import. Jabber, in Arabic, the word from which it is derived, signifies the *faith*, or the *true faith*; and Gibberti consequently means the *faithful*, or the *orthodox*, by which name of *honour* these Moors, inhabiting the low country of Abyssinia, call one another, as being constant in their faith amidst Christians with whom they must be at perpetual war, or otherwise liable to persecution in time of peace.

There is no current coin in Abyssinia. Gold is paid by weight; all the revenues are chiefly paid in kind, viz. oxen, sheep, and honey, which are the greatest necessaries of life. As for luxuries, they are obtained by a barter of gold, myrrh, coffee, elephants' teeth, and a variety of other articles which are carried over to Arabia; and in exchange for these is brought back whatever is commissioned.

Every great man in Abyssinia has one of these Gibbertis for his factor. The king has many, who are commonly the shrewdest and most intelligent of their profession. These were the first inhabitants of Abyssinia, whom commerce connected with the Arabians on the other side of the Straits of Babelmandeb, with whom they intermarry, or with one another, which preserves their colour and features, resembling both

the Abyssinians and Arabians. In Arabia, they are under the protection of some of their own countrymen, who, being sold when young as slaves, are brought up in the Mahometan religion, and enjoy all the principal posts under the Sherriffe of Mecca and the Arabian princes. These are the people who at particular times have appeared in Europe, and who have been straightway taken for, and treated as ambassadors, although they have very generally turned out to be thieves and sharpers.

More southward and westward are the kingdoms of Mara, Worgla, and Pagoma, small principalities of fixed habitations by the sea, at times free, at others dependent upon Adel; and, to the south of these, in the same flat country, is Hadea, whose capital is Harar, governed by a prince, who is a Gibberti likewise; and who, by marrying a Sheriffa, or female descendant of Mahomet, is now reckoned a Sheriffe or noble of Mahomet's family, distinguished by his wearing apparel, for the most part green, and above all a grass-green turban, the certain mark of declared hatred to Christianity.

The Gibbertis, then, are the princes and merchants of this country, converted to the Mahometan faith soon after the death of Mahomet, when the Baharnagash (as we have already stated) revolted from the empire of the Abyssinians, in whose hands all the riches of the country are centered. The black inhabitants are only their subjects, hewers of wood and drawers of water, who serve them in their families at home, take care of their camels when employed in caravans abroad, and who make the principal part of their forces in the field.

But there are other inhabitants still besides these Gibbertis and native blacks, whom we must not confound with the indigenous tribes of this country, how much

soever they may resemble them. The first of these are by the Portuguese historians called *Moors*, who are merchants from the west of Africa. Many of these, expelled from Spain, by Ferdinand and Isabella, fixed their residence here, and were afterwards joined by others of their Moorish brethren, either exiles from Spain, or inhabitants of Morocco, whom the desire of commerce induced first to settle in Arabia, till the great oppressions that followed the conquest of Egypt and Arabia, under Selim and Soliman, interrupted their trade, and scattered them here along the coast. These are the Moors that Vasques de Gama * met at Mombaza, Magadoxa, and Melinda; at all, but the last of which places, they endeavoured to betray him. These also were the Moors that he found in India, having no profession but trade, in every species of which they excelled.

The fourth sort are Arabian merchants, who come over occasionally to recover their debts, and renew correspondences with the merchants of this country. These are the richest of all, and are the bankers of the Gibbertis, who furnish them funds and merchandize, with which they carry on a most lucrative and extensive trade into the heart of Africa, through all the mountains of Abyssinia to the western sea, and through countries which are inaccessible to camels, where the ass, the mule, and, in some places oxen, are the only beasts used in carriage.

There is a fifth sort, almost below notice, unless it be for the mischief they have constantly done their country; they are the Abyssinian apostates from Christianity, the most inveterate enemies it has, and

* Conquetes dePortugais par Lafitau, Vol I. liv. ii. p. 90. Id. ibid. p. 144.

who are employed chiefly as soldiers. While in that country they are not much esteemed; though, when transported to India, they have constantly turned out men of confidence and trust, and the best troops those eastern nations have.

There is a sixth, still less in number than even these, and not known on this Continent till a few years before. These were the Turks who came from Greece and Syria, and who were, under Selim, and Soliman his son, the instruments of the conquest of Egypt and Arabia; small garrisons of whom were everywhere left by the Turks in all the fortresses and considerable towns they conquered. They are an hereditary kind of militia, who, marrying each others daughters, or the women of the country, continue from father to son to receive from Constantinople the same pay their forefathers had from Selim. These, though degenerated in figure and manners into an exact resemblance to the natives of the countries in which they have since lived, do still continue to maintain their superiority by a constant skill and attention to fire-arms, which were, at the time of their first appearance here, little known or in use among either Abyssinians or Arabians, and the means of first establishing this preference.

It has been already observed, that the Mahometan Moors and Arabs possessed all the low country on the Indian Ocean, opposite to Arabia Felix; and being, by their religion, obliged to go in pilgrimage to Mecca, as also by their sole profession, which was trade, they became, in consequence, the only carriers and directors of the commerce of Abyssinia. All the country to the east and north of Shoa was possessed and commanded chiefly by Mahometan merchants appointed by the king; where they had established a va-

riety of marts or fairs from Ifat, all the way as far as Adel.

Adel and Mara were two of the most powerful kingdoms which lie on the Indian Ocean; and, being constantly supported by soldiers from Arabia, were the first to withdraw themselves from obedience to the king of Abyssinia, and seldom paid their tribute, unless when the prince came there to raise it with an army. Ifat, Fatigar, and Dawaro, were indeed originally Christian provinces; but in weak reigns, having been ceded to Moorish governors for sums of money, they, by degrees, renounced both their religion and allegiance.

From what has been observed, the reader will conceive, that where it is said the king, from his capital in Shoa, marched down into Dawaro, Hadea, or Adel, that he then descended from the highest mountains down to the flat country, on the level with the sea; that this country, from Hadea to Dawaro, having been the seat of war for ages, was, partly by the soldier, for the use of the camp, partly by the husbandman, for the necessaries of life, cleared of wood, where the water stood constantly in pools, throughout the year; and, being all composed of fat black earth, which the torrents bring down from the rainy country of Abyssinia, was sown with millet and different kinds of grain in the driest ground, while, nearer the mountains, they pastured numerous herds of cattle. Notwithstanding, however, that the country was possessed of these advantages, the climate was intensely hot, feverish, and unhealthy, and, for the most part, from these circumstances, fatal to strangers, and hated by the Abyssinians.

Again, when it is said that the king had marched to Samhar, it is meant that he had passed this fruitful

country, and come to that part of the zone or belt, (nearest the sea) composed of gravel; which, though it enjoys neither the water nor the fruitfulness of the black earth, is in a great measure free from its attendant diseases, and here the cities and towns are placed, while the crop, oxen, and cattle, are in the cultivated part near the mountains, which, in the language of the country, is called Mazaga, signifying *black mould.*

Lastly, when he hears the army murmuring at being kept, during the rainy season, in the Kolla below, he is to remember, that then all was cool, pleasant, and safe in Upper Abyssinia. The soldiers, therefore, languished for the enjoyment of their own families, without any other occupation but merriment, festivity, and every species of gratification, that wine, and the free and uncontrouled society of the female sex, could produce.

Having now sufficiently explained and described the various names and inhabitants, the situation, soil, and climate of those provinces about to be the theatre of the war, I shall proceed to declare the occasion of it, which was nothing more than the fruit of those prejudices which, I have already said, the loose behaviour of the king, in the beginning of his reign, had produced among his neighbours, and the calamities which had enfeebled the kingdom in the preceding reigns.

It happened that one of those Moorish factors, whom I have already described, having in charge the commercial interests of the king, had been assassinated and robbed in the province of Ifat, while the king was busied with Honorius and his monks. Without complaining or expostulating, he suddenly assembled his troops, having ordered them to rendezvous at Shugura upon the frontiers, and, to shew his impa-

tience for revenge, with seven * horsemen he fell upon the nearest Mahometan settlements which were perfectly secure, and put all he found in his way to the sword without exception. Then placing himself at the head of his army, he marched, by a long day's journey, straight to Ifat, burning Kungara, Jadai, Kubat, Fadise, Calise, and Argai, towns that lie in the way, full of all sorts of valuable merchandise, and, finding no where a force assembled to oppose him, he divided his army into small detachments, sending them different ways, with orders to lay the whole countries, where they came, waste with fire and sword, while he himself remained in the camp to guard the spoil, the women, and the baggage.

The Moors, astonished at this torrent of desolation, which so suddenly had broken in, under a prince whom they had considered as immersed in pleasure, flew all to arms; and being informed that the king was alone, and scarcely had soldiers to guard his camp, they assembled in numbers, under the command of Hak-eddin, governor of Ifat, who had before plundered and murdered the king's servant. They then determined to atack Amda Sion early in the morning; but luckily two of his detachments had returned to the camp to his assistance, and joined him the very night before.

It was scarcely day when the Moors presented themselves; but, far from surprising the Abyssinians buried in sleep, they found the king with his army ranged in battle, who, without giving them time to recover from their surprise, attacked them in person with

* It has been imagined that this number should be increased to seventy, but I have followed the text: there would be little difference in the rashness of the action.

great fury; and singling out Derdar, brother to Hak-eddin, animating his men before the ranks, he struck him so violently with his lance, that he fell dead among his horse's feet, in the sight of both armies; whilst the Abyssinian troops, pressing everywhere briskly forward, put the Moors to flight, and pursued them, with great slaughter, into the woods and fastnesses.

After this victory, the king ordered his troops to build huts for themselves, at least such as could not find houses ready built. He ordered, likewise, a great tract of land contiguous, to be ploughed and sown, meaning to intimate, that his intention was to stay there with his army all the rainy season.

The Mahometans, from this measure, if it should be carried into execution, saw nothing but total extirpation before their eyes; they, therefore, with one consent, submitted to the tribute imposed upon them; and the king, having removed Hak-eddin, placed his brother Saber-eddin in his stead, and, the rainy season being now begun, dismissed his army, and returned to Tegulat in Shoa.

Though the personal gallantry of the king was a quality sufficient of itself to make him a favourite of the soldiers, his liberality was not less; all the plunder got by his troops in the field was faithfully divided among those who had fought for him; nor did he ever pretend to a share himself, unless on occasions when he was engaged in person; and then he shared upon an equal footing with the principal officers.

When returned to the capital, he shewed the same disinterestedness and generosity which he had done in the field, and distributed all he had won for his share among the great men, whom the necessary duties of government had obliged to remain at home, as also among the poor, and priests, for the maintenance

of churches; and, as well by this, as by his zeal and activity against the enemies of Christianity, he became the greatest favourite of all ranks of the clergy, notwithstanding the unpromising appearances at the beginning of his reign.

The rainy season in Abyssinia generally puts an end to the active part of war, as every one retires then to towns and villages, to screen himself from the inclemency of the climate, deluged then with daily rain. The soldier, the husbandman, and, above all, the women, dedicate this season to continued festivity and riot. These villages and towns are always placed upon the highest mountains. The valleys that intervene are soon divided by large and rapid torrents. Every hollow foot-path becomes a stream; the vallies between the hills become so miry as not to bear horse; and the waters, both deep and violent, are too apt to shift their direction to suffer any one on foot to pass safety. All this season, and this alone, people sleep in their houses in safety; their lances and shields are hung up on the sides of their hall, and their saddles and bridles taken off their horses; for in Abyssinia, at other times, the horses are always bridled, and are accustomed to eat and drink with this incumbrance. It is not, indeed, the same sort of bridle they use in the field, but a small bit of of iron, like our hunting-bridles, on purpose merely to preserve them in this habit. The court, and the principal officers of government, retire to the capital, and there administer justice, make alliances, and prepare the necessary funds and armaments, which the present exigencies of the state may require on the return of fair weather.

Amda Sion was no sooner returned to Tegulat, than the Moors again entered into a conspiracy against him. The principal were Amano king of Hadea, Sa-

ber-eddin, whom the king had made governor of Fatigar, and privately, without any open declaration, Gimmel-eddin, governor in Dawaro. But this conspiracy could not be hid from a prince of Amda Sion's vigilance and penetration. He concealed, however, any knowledge of the matter, lest it should urge the Moors to commence hostilities too early. He continued, therefore, with diligence, and without ostentation of any particular design, to make the ordinary preparations to take the field on the approaching season. This, however, did not impose upon the enemy. Whether from intelligence, or impatience of being longer inactive, Saber-eddin began the first hostilities, by surprising some Christian villages, and plundering and setting fire to the churches, before the rains had yet entirely ceased.

Those who have written accounts of Abyssinia, seem to agree in extolling the people of that country, for giving no belief to the existence or reality of witchcraft or sorcery. Why they have fixed on this particular nation is hard to determine. But, as for me, I have no doubt in asserting, that there is not a barbarous or ignorant people, that I ever knew, of which this can be truly said; but certainly it never was less true than when said of Abyssinians. There is scarce a monk in any lonely monastery (such as those in the hot and unwholesome valley of Waldubba), not a hermit of the many upon the mountains, not an old priest who has lived any time sequestered from society, that does not pretend to possess charms offensive and defensive, and several methods by which he can, at will, look into futurity. The Moors are all, to a man, persuaded of this: their arms and necks are loaded with amulets against witchcraft. Their women are believed to have all the mischievous powers of fascination; and both sexes a hundred secrets of divination. The Falasha are addicted to this in a still

greater degree, if possible. It is always believed by every individual Abyssinian, that the number of hyænas the smell of carrion brings into the city of Gondar every night, are the Falasha from the neighbouring mountains, transformed by the effect, and for the purposes of enchantment. Even the Galla, a barbarous and stranger nation, hostile to the Abyssinians, and differing in language and religion, still agree with them in a hearty belief of the possibility of practising witchcraft, so as to occasion sickness and death at a very great distance, blast the harvests, poison the waters, and render people incapable of propagating their species.

Amano, king of Hadea, possessed one of these conjurers, who, for his knowledge of futurity, was famous among all the Mahometans of the low country. The king of Hadea himself had gone no further than to determine to rebel; but whether he was to go up to fight with Amda Sion in Shoa, or await him more successfully in Hadea, was a doubt wholly within the decision of the conjurer, who assured his master, that if he remained below, and waited for Amda Sion in Hadea, that prince would descend to him, and in one battle lose his kingdom and life.

The king, whose principal view was to prevent the junction of the confederates, and, if possible, to fight them separately, did not stay till his whole army was assembled, but, as soon as he got together a body of troops sufficient to make head against any one of the rebels, he sent that body immediately on the service for which it was destined, in order to disappoint a general combination.

A large body of horse and foot, whose post was in the van of the royal army, when the king marched at the head of it, was first ready; and without delay was sent against Amano into Hadea, under the command of the general of the cavalry. This officer ex-

ecuted the service on which he was sent with the greatest diligence possible, having the best horses, and the strongest and most active men in the army. By long marches, he came upon the king of Hadea, surprised him before his troops were all assembled, gave him an entire defeat, and made him prisoner. However ill the conjurer had provided for the king's safety, he seems to have been more attentive to his own; great search was made for him by order of Amda Sion; but he was not to be found, having very early upon the first sight of the king's troops, fled and hid himself in Ifat.

The next detachment was sent against Saber-eddin in Fatigar. The governor of Amhara commanded this, with orders to lay the whole country waste, and by all means provoke Saber-eddin to risk a battle, either before or after the junction of the troops which were to march thither from Hadea. But when the king was thus busy with the Moors, news were brought him, that the Falasha had rebelled, and were in arms, in very great numbers. The king ordered Tzaga Christos, governor of Begemder, to assemble his troops, with those of Gondar *, Sacalta, and Damot, and march against those rebels, before they had time to ruin the country; and having thus made provision against all his enemies, Amda Sion proceeded, with the remainder of his army, to Dawaro.

Hydar was governor in this province for the king, who, though he shewed outwardly every appearance of duty and fidelity, was, notwithstanding, deep in the conspiracy with Saber-eddin, and had close correspondence with the king of Adel, whose capital, Aussa, was not at a great distance from him.

* Gondar was the name of a district, and perhaps of a village, long before it became a royal residence.—E.

The king kept his Easter at Gaza, close upon the verge of the desert; and, being willing to accustom his troops to action and hardship, he left his tents and baggage behind with the army; and, secretly taking with him but twenty-six horsemen, he made an incursion upon Samhar, destroying all before him, and staying all night, though he had no provisions, in the middle of his enemies, without so much as lying down to sleep, slackening his belt, or taking off any part of his armour.

The king was no sooner gone than the army missed him, and was all in the greatest uproar. But, having finished his expedition, he joined them in the morning, and encamped again with them. On his arrival, he found waiting for him a messenger from Tzaga Christos, with accounts that he had fought successfully with the Falasha, entirely defeated them, slain many, and forced the rest to hide themselves in their inaccessible mountains. Immediately after this intelligence, Tzaga Christos, with his victorious army, joined the king also.

These tidings were followed by others, equally prosperous, from Hadea and Fatigar. They were, that the king's army in those parts had forced Saber-eddin to a battle, and beaten him; taken and plundered his house, and brought his wife and children prisoners; and that the troops had found that country full of merchandise and riches of all kinds; that they were already laden and incumbered with the quantity to such a degree, that they were all speaking of disbanding, and retiring to their houses, with riches sufficient for the rest of their lives, although a great part of the country remained as yet untouched; and, therefore, it was requested of the king in all diligence to enter it on his side also, and march southward till both armies met. Immediately upon this message, the

king, having refreshed his troops, and informed them of the good prospects that were before them, decamped with his whole army, and entered the province of Ifat.

When Saber-eddin saw the king's forces joined, that he had no allies, and that it was, in the situation of his army, equally dangerous to stay or to fly, he took a resolution of submitting himself to the king's mercy; but, first, he endeavoured to soften his anger, and obtain some assurances through the mediation of the queen. The king, however, having publicly reproved the queen for offering to intermeddle in such matters, and growing more violent and inflexible upon this application, there remained no alternative but that of surrendering himself at discretion. Whereupon Saber-eddin threw himself at the king's feet. The soldiers and by-standers, far from being moved at such a sight, with one voice earnestly besought the king, that the murderer of so many priests, and the profaner and destroyer of so many Christian churches, should instantly meet the death his crimes had merited. The king, however, whose mercy seems to have been equal to his bravery, after having reproved him with great asperity, and upbraided him with his cruelty, presumption, and ingratitude, ordered him only to be put in irons, and committed to a close prison. At the same time, he displaced Hydar, governor of the province of Dawaro, of whose treason he had been long informed; and he invested Gimmel-eddin, Saber-eddin's brother, with the government of the Mahometan provinces, who, as he pretended, had not been present at the beginning of the war, but had preserved his allegiance to the king, and dissuaded his brother from the rebellion.

While the king was thus settling the government of the rebellious provinces, he received intelligence

that the kings of Adel and Mara had resolved to march after him on his return to Shoa, and give him battle.

At this time he was encamped on the river Hawash, at the head of the whole army, now united. The news of the hostile intentions of the kings of Adel and Mara so exasperated him, that he determined to enlarge his scheme of vengeance beyond the limits he had first prescribed to it. He called the principal officers of his army together, while he himself stood upon an eminence, the soldiers surrounding him on all sides. Near him, on the same eminence, was a monk, noted for his holiness, in the habit in which he celebrated divine service. The king, in a long speech, pronounced with unusual vehemence, described the many offences committed against him by the Mahometan states on the coast. The ringleaders of these commotions, he declared, were the kings of Adel and Mara. He enumerated various instances of cruelty, murder, and sacrilege, of which they had been guilty; the number of priests that they had slain, the churches that they had burned, and the Christian women and children that they had carried into slavery, which was now become a commerce, and a great motive of war. They, and they only, had stirred up his Mahometan subjects to infest the frontiers both in peace and war. He added, that, considering the immense booty which had been taken, it might seem that avarice was the motive of his being now in arms; but this, for his own part, he totally disclaimed. He neither had nor would apply the smallest portion of the plunder to his own use, but considered it as unlawful, as being purchased with the blood and liberty of his subjects and brethren, the meanest of whom he valued more than the blood and riches of all the infidels in Adel. He, therefore, called them together to be witnesses that he dedicated himself a soldier to Jesus Christ;

and he did now swear upon the holy eucharist, that, though but twenty of his army should join with him, he would not turn his back upon Adel or Mara, till he had either forced them to tribute and submission, or extirpated them, and annihilated their religion.

He then entered the tent which is always pitched for divine service in the Abyssinian camp *, and took the sacrament from the hands of the monk, in presence of the whole army. All the principal officers did the same, and every individual of the army, with repeated shouts, declared, that they were bound by the oath the king had then made. A violent fury spread instantaneously through the whole army; they considered that part of the king's speech as a reproach, which mentioned the spoils they had taken to have been bought by the blood of Christians, their brethren. Every hand laid hold of a torch, and, whether the plunder was his own or his fellow-soldier's, each man set fire, without interruption, to the merchandise that was next him. The whole riches of Ifat and Hadea, Fatigar and Dawaro, were consumed in an instant by these fanatics, who now, satisfied that they were purged from the impurity which the king had attributed to their plunder, returned poor to their standards; but convinced, in their own conscience, of having, by their sacrament and expiation, become the soldiers of Christ, they thirsted no longer after any thing but the blood of the inhabitants of Adel and Mara.

Soon after, Amda Sion heard that the Moors had attacked his army in Ifat two several nights, and that his troops, having suffered greatly, had with difficulty been able to maintain themselves in their camp. The king was then upon his march, when he heard these disagreeable news; he hastened, therefore, imme-

* See Pref. to the Hist. of Abyss. p. 22. &c.

diately to their relief, and encamped at night in an advantageous post, before his main army, with a view of taking advantage of this situation, if the Moors, as he expected, should renew their attack for the third time, during the night.

The Abyssinians, to a man, are fearful of the night, unwilling to travel, and, above all, to fight in that season, when they imagine the world is in possession of certain genii, averse to intercourse with men, and very vindictive, if even by accident they are ruffled, or put out of their way by their interference. This, indeed, is carried to so great a height, that no man will venture to throw water out of a bason upon the ground, for fear that, in ever so small a space the water should have to fall, the dignity of some elf, or fairy, may be violated. The Moors have none of these apprehensions; but are accustomed, in the way of trade, to travel at all hours, sometimes from necessity, often from choice, to avoid the heat. They laugh at the superstitions of the Abyssinians, and not unfrequently avail themselves of them. A verse of the Koran, sewed up in leather, and tied round their necks or their arms, secures them from all these incorporeal enemies; and, from this known advantage, if other circumstances are favourable, they never fail to fight the Abyssinians at or before the dawn of the morning; for in this country there is no twilight.

The Moors did not, in this instance, disappoint the king's expectation. With all possible secrecy, they marched to the attack of the camp, while the king, having refreshed his troops, put himself in motion to intercept them; and they were now arrived, and engaged in several places with great vigour. The camp was in apparent danger, though vigorously defended. At this moment Amda Sion, with his fresh troops, fell violently upon their rear; and, as soon as it was known by the Moors that this was the king, they

withdrew their army with all possible speed, carrying with them a very considerable booty.

The success which had followed these night expeditions, the small loss that had attended the pursuit, even after they were defeated, from the perfect knowledge they had of the country, inspired them with a resolution to avoid pitched battles, but to distress and harass the king's army every night. They accordingly brought their camp nearer than usual to the king's quarters. This began to be felt by the army, which was prevented from foraging at a great distance: but provisions could not be dispensed with. The king, therefore, detached a large body of horse and foot that had not been engaged or fatigued. The greatest part of the foot he ordered to return with the cattle it should have taken; but the horsemen, with each a foot soldier behind him, he directed to take post in a wood, near a pool of water where the Moorish troops, after an assault in the night, retired, and took refreshments and sleep, by the time the sun began to be hot. The Moors again appeared in the night, attacked the camp in several places, and alarmed the whole army; but, by the bravery and vigour of the king, who everywhere animated his troops by his own example, they were obliged to retreat a little before morning, more fatigued, and more roughly handled, than they had hitherto been in any such expedition.

The king, as if equally tired, followed them no further than the precincts of his camp; and the Moors, scarcely comforted by this forbearance, after so great a loss, retreated, as usual, to receive succour of fresh troops, and enjoy their repose in the neighbourhood of shade and water. They had, however, scarce thrown aside their arms, disposed of their wounded in proper places, and begun to assuage their thirst

after the toils of the assault, when the Abyssinian horse, breaking through the covert, came swiftly upon them, unable either to fight or fly, and the whole body of them was cut to pieces, without one man escaping.

The king, on the return of his troops, began to consider, and, by combining various circumstances in his mind, to suspect strongly, that, from the Moors attacking him, as they had for some time lately done, always in the most unfavourable circumstances, there must be some intelligence between his camp and that of the enemy. On inquiring more particularly into the grounds of this suspicion, three men of Harar (who had long attended the army as spies) were discovered, and, being convicted, were carried out, and their heads cut off at the entrance of the camp; after which the king, who now found himself without an enemy in these parts, struck his tents, and returned to Gaza in Dawaro.

This movement of Amda Sion's had more the appearance of opening a campaign than the closing of one, and occasioned great discontent among the soldiers, who had done their business, and were without an enemy, just at that time when the rains fall so heavy, and the country becomes so unwholesome as to make it unadvisable to keep the field. They, therefore, remonstrated by their officers to the king, that they must return to their houses for the several months of winter which were to follow; and that, after the fatigues, dangers, and hardships they had undergone for so many months, to persist in staying longer at such a season, in this country, was equal to condemning them to death.

Gimmel-eddin, moreover, the new-appointed governor, insisted with Amda Sion, that he was able enough himself to keep all the tributary provinces in peace,

and true allegiance to the king; but if, on the contrary, the king chose to eat them up with a large army living constantly among them, as well as upon every pretence laying them waste with the sword, in the manner he was now doing, he could not be answerable for the tribute, nor did he believe they would be able to pay it. But the king, who saw the motives both of his officers, and of the Moorish governor, continued firm in his resolutions. He sharply reproved both Gimmel-eddin and his army for their want of discipline, and desire of idleness, and ordered the officers to acquaint their men, that, if they were afraid of rains, he would carry them to Adel, where there were none; that, for his part, he had made a resolution, which he would keep most steadily, never to leave his camp and the field, while there was one village in his dominions that did not acknowledge him for its sovereign.

Accordingly, on the 13th day of June 1316, immediately after this declaration, he struck his tents, and marched into Samhar, to disappoint, if possible, the confederacy that some of the principle Moorish states had entered into against him. These had agreed, one by one, to harass his camp by night, and, after having obliged him to retreat to Shoa in disorder, to give him battle there before he had time to refresh his troops. The authors of this conspiracy were seven in number; Adel, Mara, Ticho, Agwama, Bakla*, Murgar, and Gabula, and they had already collected a considerable army. The king, who saw they persisted in their nightly attacks, rode out, thinly accompanied, to choose a post for an encampment that was

* A tribe of the Shepherds; all the rest, but the two first, unknown in Abyssinia at this day.

to give him the greatest advantage over his enemy; and, whilst thus occupied, he was suddenly surrounded by a body of troops of Adel, lying in ambush for him. A soldier (in appearance an Abyssinian) came so close to the king as to strike him with his sword on the back, with such violence, that it cut his belt in two, and, having wounded him through his armour, was ready to repeat the blow, when the king pierced him through the forehead with his lance; upon which his party fled.

But the Moors, for five successive nights, did not fail in their attempts upon his camp, which wearied, and greatly contributed to discontent, his men; the more so, because the enemy declined coming to any general engagement, though the king frequently offered it. Amda Sion, therefore, decamped the 28th of June, and, leaving this disadvantageous station, advanced a day's march nearer Mara, pointing, as it were, to the very centre of that kingdom. But here, again, he was stopt by the discontent of his soldiers, who absolutely refused to go farther, or spend the whole season in arms, in this inclement climate, while the rest of his subjects, in full enjoyment of health and plenty, were rioting at home.

This disposition of the army was no sooner known to the king, than he called the principal of them together, and, planting himself on a rising ground, he began to harangue his soldiers with so much eloquence and force of reasoning, that they, who before had only learned to admire their king as a soldier, were obliged to confess, that, as an orator, he as much excelled every man in his state, as he did the lowest man of his kingdom in dignity. He put his soldiers in mind, "that this was not a common expedition, like those of his predecessors, marching through the country for the purpose of levying their revenue; that the

intention of the present war was to avenge the blood of so many innocent Christians, slain in security and full peace, from no provocation but hatred of their religion; that they were instruments in the hand of God to revenge the death of so many priests and monks, who had been wantonly offered as sacrifices upon their own altars; that they were not a common army, but one confederated upon oath, having sworn upon the sacrament, at the passage of the river Hawash, that they would not return into Abyssinia till they had beat down and ruined the strength of the Mahometans in those kingdoms; so that now, when every thing had succeeded to their wishes, when every Mahometan army had been defeated as soon as it presented itself, and the whole country lay open to the chastisements they pleased to inflict, to talk of a retreat or forbearance was to make a mockery at once of their oath, and the motive of their expedition. He shewed, by invincible reasonings, the great hardships and danger that would attend his retreat through a country, already wasted and unable to maintain the army; what an alarm it would occasion in Shoa, to find him returning with an enemy at his heels, following him to his very capital; that such, however, must be the consequence; for it was plain, that, though the enemy declined fighting, yet there was no possibility of hindering them from following him so near as to give his retreat every appearance of flight, and to bring an expedition, begun with success, to an ignominious and a fatal end.

"He upbraided them with his own example; that early their prophets had foretold he was a prince fond of luxury and ease, which, in the main, he did not deny, but confessed that he was so; and that they all should have an attachment to their pleasures and enjoyments, he thought but reasonable. He desired,

however, in this, they would do as much as he did, and only suspend their love of ease and rest as long as their duty to God, to their country, and their murdered brethren, required; for, till these duties were fulfilled, ease and enjoyment to a Christian, and especially to them, bound by oath to accomplish a certain purpose, was, in his eyes, little short of apostacy." A loud acclamation followed from the whole army. They declared again, that they renewed their sacrament taken at the passage of the Hawash, that they were Christ's soldiers, and would follow their sovereign unto death.

Though the great personal merit of the king, and the grace, force, and dignity with which he spoke, had, of themselves, produced a sudden change in the mind of the soldiers, yet it had very much contributed to the increase of this good disposition, that a monk, of great holiness and austerity of manners, living in a cell on the point of a steep rock, had come down from Shoa to the camp, declaring, that he had found it written in the Revelation of St John, that this year the religion of Mahomet was to be utterly extirpated throughout the world. Full of this idea, on the feast of Ras Werk, in the month of July, the army passed the Yass, a large river of the kingdom of Mara, and encamped there. The troops were alarmed, the night after their arrival, by a piece of intelligence, which proved a falsehood.

A woman, whose father had been a Christian, said, that she had very lately left the Moorish camp; that the enemy were at no great distance, and only waited a night of storm and rain to make a general attack upon the king's army; and the clouds threatening then a night of foul weather, it was not doubted but the engagement was immediately to follow. It blew then so violent a storm, that the king's tent,

and most of those in the camp, were thrown down, and the soldiers were in very great confusion, imagining, every moment, the Moors ready to fall on them. But whether the story was a falsehood, or the storm too great for the Moors to venture out, nothing happened that night, nor, indeed, during their stay in that station.

At this time, a number of priests and others came out of curiosity to see their king making conquests of provinces and people, till then unknown to them even by name. Several large detachments of fresh troops from Abyssinia also arrived, and joined the army. Upon this Amda Sion advanced a day's journey farther into Mara, and took a strong post, resolving to maintain himself there, and, by detachments, lay the whole country desolate. This place is called Dassi. There was neither river, however, nor spring near it, but only water procured by digging in the sand, being what comes down from the sides of the mountains in the rainy reason, and, having filtered through the loose earth, has reached the sand and gravel, where it stagnates, or finds slowly its level to the sea. Here the king was taken dangerously ill with the fever of the Kolla.

The altercation between Amda Sion and his soldiers, and the resolutions taken in consequence of these, were faithfully carried to the king of Adel. The march of the king at such a season of the year, the slow pace with which he advanced towards the very heart of the country, the care he took of providing all necessaries for his army, and his reinforcing it at such a season, all shewed this was no partial, sudden incursion, but meant as a decisive blow, fatal to the independence of these petty sovereigns and states. To this it may be added, that Gimmel-eddin, whom the king had released from prison, and set over the

Moorish provinces of Abyssinia, conveyed to them, in the most direct manner, that such were the king's purposes. He told them, moreover, this march into their country, was not either to increase their tribute, or for the sake of plunder, or to force them to be his subjects; that Amda Sion's main design was against their religion, which he and his soldiers had vowed to destroy; that it was not the time to think of peace, or tribute, upon any terms; for, were they even to sell their wives and children, the price would not be accepted, unless they forsook the religion of their fathers, and embraced Christianity. He further added, that *his* resolution was already taken, that he would die firm in the faith, a good Mahometan, as he had lived, not tamely, however, but in the middle of his enemies; and that he was now making every sort of preparation to resist to the latest breath.

No sooner was this intelligence from Gimmel-eddin published, than a kind of frenzy seized the people of Adel; they ran tumultuously to arms, and, with shrieks and adjurations, demanded to be led immediately against the Abyssinians, for they no longer desired to live upon such terms.

There was, among the leading men of the Moors, one Saleh, chief of a small district called Cassi, by birth a Sherriffe, *i. e.* one of the race of Mahomet, who, to the nobility of his birth, joined a sacred character. He was Iman, or high priest of the Moors, and, for both these reasons, held in the greatest estimation among them. This man undertook, by his personal influence, to unite all the Moorish states in a common league. For it is to be observed, that, though religion was very powerful in uniting the Moors against the Christians, yet the love of gain, and jealousies of commerce, perpetually kept a party alive, that favoured the king for their own interest, in the

very heart of the Moorish confederacies and councils. To overcome this was the object of Saleh, and he succeeded beyond expectation; as sixteen kings brought 40,000 men into the field under their several leaders; but the chief command was given to the king of Adel.

I must remind the reader, that I am translating an Abyssinian historian. These, whom this chronicle styles kings, must be considered as being only hereditary and independent chiefs, not tributary to Abyssinia. Their names are Adel, Mara, Bakla, Haggara, Fadise, Gadai, Nagal, Zuba, Harlar, Hobal, Hangila, Tarshish, Ain, Ilbiro, Zeyla, and Estè. Now, when we consider that these sixteen kings brought only 40,000 men, and that they were commanded, under these sixteen, by 2712 leaders, or governors of districts, all which are set down by name, we must have a very contemptible opinion of the extent and populousness of these newly-erected kingdoms.

It appears to me unnecessary to repeat, after my historian, the names of each of these villages, which probably do not now exist, and are, perhaps, utterly unknown. I shall only observe, in passing, that here we find Tarshis, or Tarshish, a kingdom on the coast of the ocean, directly in the way to Sofala; another strong presumption that Sofala and Ophir were the same, and that this is the Tarshish where Solomon's fleet stopt when going to Ophir.

Amda Sion's fever hindering him to march forward, and being unwilling to risk a battle where he was not able to command in person, he continued close in his strong camp at Dassi, waiting his recovery; but, in the mean time, he made considerable detachments on all sides to lay the country waste around him, till he should be able to advance farther into it.

Of all the royal army, as it stood upon the establishment, the king had only with him the troops from

the provinces of Amhara, Shoa, Gojam, and Damot, and these were what composed the rear, when the whole, called the royal army, was assembled. All his troops were regularly paid, well armed and clothed, and were not only provided with every necessary, but were become exceedingly rich, and, therefore, the more careless of discipline, and difficult to manage, on account of the repeated conquests that had followed one another, ever since the king, crossing the river Hawash, had come into the desert kingdom of Mara, unfruitful in soil, but flourishing by trade, and rich in India commodities. The soldiers had here loaded themselves so much with spoils and merchandize, that they began rather to think of returning home, and enjoying what they had got, than of pushing their conquests still farther to the destruction of Adel and Mara. The putrid state of the water, in this sultry and unwholesome climate, had afflicted the king with the fever of the country, which he had taken no means to remedy or prevent. No consideration could keep him from exposing himself to the most violent sun-beams, and to the more noxious vapours of the night; and it was now the seventh day since his fever had been increasing, although he neither ate nor drank. The army expecting, on account of the king's illness, a speedy order to return, conversed of nothing else within the camp, with that kind of security as if they had already received orders to return.

The Mahometan army had assembled, and no information of it been brought to the king. Saleh's influence had united them all; and the king's sickness had made this easier than it otherwise would have been. It happened, that, the king's fever abating the ninth day, he sent out to procure himself venison, with which this country abounds, and which is believed, by people of all ranks in Abyssinia, to be the only pro-

per food and restorative after sickness. After having killed sufficiently for the king's immediate use, the huntsmen returned; two only remained, who continued the pursuit of the game through the woods, till they were four days journey distant from their camp; when, being in search of water for their dogs, they met a Moor engaged in the same business with themselves, who shewed them his army encamped at no considerable distance, and in very great numbers. Upon this they returned in all haste to the king, to apprize him of his danger, who sent immediately some horse to discover the number, situation, and designs of the enemy: above all, if possible, to take a prisoner; for the huntsmen had put theirs to death, that he might be no incumbrance to them upon their return.

The king's fever was now gone, but his strength was not recovered. The necessity of the case requiring it, he attempted to rise from his bed and put on his armour; but, fainting, he fell upon his face with weakness, while his servant was girding on his sword.

The horse now returned, and confirmed the tidings the huntsmen had brought; they had found the Moorish army in the same place it was first discovered, by the water side; but the account of their number and appearance was such, that the whole army was struck with a panic. The king's wives* (as the historian says, by which it would appear he had more than one) endeavoured to persuade him not to risk a battle in the weak state of health he then was in; but to retire from this low, unwholesome country; and occupy the

* It was a common practice, in those times, to have the king's women and their attendants placed in two groupes of tents; one on the right, and another on the left of the royal pavilion. These were called the Kanya, and Gera Baltihat. See the account of the Camp in the Introduction to this Book.—E.

passes that lead into Upper Abyssinia, so as to make it impossible for the enemy to follow him into Shoa.

The king having washed and refreshed himself, with a countenance full of confidence, sat down at the door of his tent. Whilst officers and soldiers crowded about him, he calmly, in the way of conversation, told them, "That, being men of experience, as they were, he was surprised they should be liable, at every instant, to panic and despondency, totally unworthy the character of a veteran army. "You know," said he, "that I came against the king of Adel, and to recover that province, one of the old dependencies of my crown. And though it has happened that, in our march, you have loaded yourselves with riches, which I have permitted, as well out of my love to you, as because it distresses the enemy, yet my object was not to plunder merchants. If in battle to-morrow I be beaten, for God forbid that I should decline it when offered, I shall be the first to set you the example how to die like men in the middle of your enemies. But while I am living, it never shall be said that I suffered the standard of Christ to fly before the profane ensigns of infidels. As to what regards our present circumstances, my sickness, and the number of the Moorish troops, these make no alteration in my good hopes, that I shall tread upon the king of Adel's neck to-morrow. For, as it was never my opinion that it was my own strength and valour, or their want of it, which has so often been the means of preserving me from their hands: so I do not fear at present that my accidental weakness will give them any advantage over me, as long as I trust in God's strength as much as ever I have done."

The soldiers, hearing with what confidence and firmness the king spake, began to look on his recovery as a miracle. They all, therefore, with one accord, took

to their arms, and desired to be led against the enemy, without waiting till it should come to them. They only besought the king, that he would not expose his person as usual, but trust to the bravery of his troops, eager for action, without being lavish of that life, the loss of which would be to the Mahometans a greater victory than regaining all he had conquered. The king, bidding his troops to be of good courage, and take rest and refreshment, sent away the women, children, and other incumbrances, to a small convent on the side of the mountain, called Debra Martel *; and, being informed of the situation of the country in general, and the particular posts where he could get water in greater plenty, he advanced with his army by a slow march towards the enemy.

The next day he received intelligence by a Moor, that the Mahometans had not only thrown poison into all the wells, but had also corrupted the water in the front of the army by various spells and enchantments; that they were not advancing, but were waiting for troops from some of the small districts of Adel that had not yet joined the army. Hereupon the king ordered his Fit-Auraris to advance a day before him, and sent a priest, called Tecla Sion, along with him, to bless and consecrate the water, and thereby free it from the enchantments of the Moors. He himself followed with his army, and sat down by a small river, a short way distant from the enemy.

The Fit-Auraris is an officer that commands a party of men, who go always advanced before the front of an Abyssinian army, at a greater or smaller distance, according as circumstances require. His office will be described more at large in the sequel.

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* Mountain of the Testimony.

When arrived at the river, the army began to bathe themselves, their mules, and their horses, in the same manner as is usual throughout all Abyssinia on the feast of the Epiphany. This lustration was in honour of Tecla Sion, who had consecrated the water, broken all the magic spells, and changed its name to that of the river Jordan. But, while they were thus employed, the Fit-Auraris had come up with a large party of the enemy, and, with them a number of women, provided with drugs to poison and enchant the water; and this numerous body of fanatics had fallen so rudely on the Fit-Auraris, that it beat him back on the main body, to whom he brought the news of his own defeat*.

A violent panic immediately seized the whole Abyssinian army, and it refused to advance a step farther. The tents had been left standing on the side of the river they first came to, and they then passed to the other side. But, upon sight of the Fit-Auraris, they returned to the tents, that, having the river on their front, they might fight the enemy with more advantage if they came to attack them. They did not continue long in this resolution; the greatest part of them were for leaving their tents, and retiring to Abyssinia for assistance; and, when the numbers should be more upon an equality, return to fight the enemy. The Moorish army at this instant coming in sight, increased the number of converts to this opinion.

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* The reader may, perhaps, smile at this apparatus of enchantment and consecration, which is frequently employed both by the Arabs and Abyssinians. It has great effect in raising the spirits of an army, in these barbarous regions; nor is the practice incompatible with the brightest qualities of heroism or discipline. Those who have read Livy, know, that it was under the direction of a hen and chickens, that the Romans subdued the world.—E.

The king, in the utmost agony, galloping through the ranks, continued to use all manner of arguments with his mutinous soldiers. He told them, that retiring to their camp was to put themselves in prison; that, being mostly composed of horse, their advantage was in a plain like that before them; that retreating to join the main body at such a distance, was a vain idea, as the enemy was so close at their heels. Finally, all he desired of them was, that those who would not fight should only stand as spectators, but not leave their places. As no sign of content or conviction was returned, the king, seeing that all was lost if they disbanded, the enemy being just ready to engage, ordered his master of the horse, and five others, to attack the left wing of the enemy, while he, with a small part of his servants and household, did the same on the right.

The Abyssinian history, seldom just to the memory of individuals, has yet, in this instance (almost a single one), preserved the names of those brave men. The first, was Zana Asferi; the second, Tecla; the third Wanag Araad; the fourth, Saif Seguid (one of the king's sons); the fifth, Badel Waliz; and the sixth, Kedami. These, as is supposed, with their attendants and servants (though history is silent but as to the six), fell furiously on the left of the Mahometan army.

The king, at the first onset, killed, with his own hand, the two leaders of the right wing; and his son, Saif Seguid, having also slain another considerable officer on the left, a panic seized both these bodies of Moors, and the army apparently began, at one and the same time, to waver. On which the Abyssinians, now ashamed of their conduct, and perceiving the king's danger, with a great shout fell furiously upon the enemy. The whole Moorish army having, by

this time joined, the battle was fought with great obstinacy on both sides, till first the centre, then the left wing of the Moors, was broken and dispersed; but the right, consisting chiefly of strangers from Arabia, kept together; and, not knowing the country, retired into a narrow deep valley, surrounded by steep perpendicular rocks, covered thick with wood.

The Abyssinian army, thinking all at an end by the flight of the Moors, began, after their usual custom, to plunder, by stripping and mangling the bodies of the killed and wounded. But the king, who, from the mistake of the Arabians, saw the destruction of this right wing certain, if immediately pursued, ordered it every where to be proclaimed through the field, that the whole army should repair to the royal standard, which he had raised on an eminence, and give over plundering, under pain of death. Finding this order, however, slackly obeyed, he himself, scouring the field at the head of a few horse, with his own hand slew two of his soldiers whom he found stripping the dead, without regard to his proclamation. This example from a prince, exceedingly sparing of the blood of his soldiers, had the effect to recall them all to the royal standard displayed on a rising ground.

He then separated his army into two divisions; all the foot, and those of his horse that had principally suffered in the severe engagement of the day, he led up to the mouth of the valley where the right wing of the Arabians had shut themselves up; and, having beset all access to the entrance of it, he ordered the foot to climb up through the woods, and on every side surround the valley above the heads of those unhappy people, thus devoted to certain destruction.

While this was doing, the king ordered those of the cavalry, that had suffered least in the fatigue of the day, to refresh themselves and their horses. He knew no

time was lost by this, as the Moorish army that escaped from the engagement, worn out with fatigue, thirst, and hunger, would only retire a short day's march to the water, where, finding themselves not pursued, and incumbered with the number of their wounded, they would necessarily rest themselves; and this was precisely the situation, in which his huntsmen first found them, by the side of a large pool of water.

The king gave the command of this part of his army to the master of the horse, with orders to pursue them one day farther; whilst he, having taken a short refreshment, began to attack the right wing of the Arabians shut up in the valley. The king, dismounting, led the attack against the front of the Arabians, who, seeing their situation now desperate, began to make every effort to get from the valley into the plain. But they did not yet know upon what disadvantageous ground they were engaged, till the soldiers from the rocks above, every way surrounding them, rolled down immense stones which passed through them in all directions. Pressed, therefore, violently, by the king in their front, and in the rear destroyed by an enemy they neither could see nor resist, they fell immediately into confusion, and were to a man, slaughtered upon the spot; upon which the king, giving his troops orders for a general plunder, retired himself to his camp, and in his tent received from the master of the horse an account of his expedition.

This officer had proceeded slowly, spreading his troops as wide as possible upon the tract of the retreating enemy, to give a smaller chance for any to escape. All directed their flight towards the pool of water, and were there destroyed without mercy, till a little after sunset. The pursuers had then advanced to the ground where Saleh, king of Mara, had gathered the scattered remains of his once powerful army;

but now, overcome with heat, dispirited by their defeat, and worn out by the fatigues of a long and obstinate engagement, all that remained of these unfortunate troops were strewed upon the ground, lapping water like beasts, their only comfort that remained, equally incapable of fighting or flying. The master of the horse, in great vigour and strength from his late refreshments and recent victory, had no trouble with these unfortunate people but to direct their execution; and this was performed by the soldiers with all the rage and cruelty that a difference of religion could possibly inspire. For, after the king's speech of the 9th of June, in which he upbraided them with breach of their oath, and that they were slow in avenging the blood of their brethren and priests wantonly slain by the Moors, every man in the army measured the exactness with which he acquitted himself of the sacrament at the Hawash, only by the quantity of blood that he could shed. Weary at last with butchery, a few were taken prisoners, and among these was Saleh, king of Mara. It was evening before the king returned from the slaughter of the right wing; and it was night when the soldiers, as fatigued with plundering as with fighting, returned to the camp.

The next morning, he heard of the success of his cavalry under the master of the horse, who joined him before mid-day. The unfortunate Saleh was, in sight of the whole army, brought before the king, clothed in the distinguished habit and marks of his dignity, in which he had fought the day before at the head of his troops; gold chains were about his arms, and a gold collar, enriched with precious stones, about his neck. The king scarcely deigned to speak to him, whilst the royal prisoner likewise observed a profound silence. When the army had

satisfied their curiosity with the sight of this prince (once the object of their fear), the king, by a motion of his hand, ordered him to be hanged upon a tree at the entrance of the camp, with all the ornaments he had upon him. After this the queen of Mara, concerning whom so many surprising stories had been told, of her poisoning the waters by drugs and enchantments, was, notwithstanding the known partiality of this king for the fair sex, ordered to be hewn in pieces by the soldiers, and her body given to the dogs.

Amda Sion then dispatched a messenger with the news of his victory to the queens, his wives, and the rest of the ladies he had left at Debra Martel; when the monks of the convent immediately began a solemn procession and thanksgiving, attended by the exercise of every sort of work of charity and piety.

It was now the month of July, when the rains in Abyssinia became both constant and violent. The king called a council of the principal nobility, officers, and priests, to determine whether he should go straight home, or send their wives, children, and baggage before them the direct road, while the light and unincumbered army should take a compass, and lay waste a part of the kingdom of Adel it had already invaded, and return in another direction. The majority of the army, and the priests above all, were for the first proposal; but the king and principal officers thought the advantages gained by so much blood were to be followed, till they should either have reduced the Mahometans to a state of weakness that should make them no longer formidable to Abyssinia, or, if prosperous fortune still attended them further, extirpate the people and religion together.—This opinion prevailed.

The king, therefore, dismissed his baggage, his wo-

men, children, servants, and useless people. He retained an army of veteran soldiers only, more formidable than six times the number that could be brought against them; and, trusting now to the country into which he marched for support, he advanced, and entered a town called Zeyla, and there took up his quarters. He had scarcely taken possession of the town, when that very night he sent a detachment to surprise a large and rich village called Taraca, where he put all the men to the sword, making the women slaves for the service of the army, instead of those whom he had sent home.

The king's views, by such small expeditions, were to accustom his soldiers to fight out of his presence, and wean them from a persuasion, now become general, that victory could not be obtained but where he commanded.

On the 10th of July, the king continued his march, without opposition, to Darbé, whence, the next morning, he sent different parties to the right and left, to burn and destroy the country. They accordingly laid waste all the province of Gassi, slaying Abdullah the Sherriffe, who was the governor, and son of Saruch, the Imam, author of the conspiracy against him. From thence he fell suddenly upon Abalgè and Talab, a large district belonging to the king of Adel.

This prince, hearing that Amda Sion, instead of returning, as was usual in the rainy season, into Abyssinia, had determined to continue to ravage his whole country, was not, on his part, remiss in preparing means to resist him; and he had assembled, from every province, all the forces they could raise, to make one last effort against their common enemy.

Amda Sion, therefore, had scarcely retired from the destruction of Talab, when the king of Adel (now desperate by being so long a spectator of the ruin of

his kingdom) marched hastily to meet him, with much less precaution than his own situation, and the character of his enemy required. Amda Sion, whose whole wish was to bring the Moors to an engagement as often as occasion presented, left off his plundering upon the first news that the king of Adel had taken the field, and, allowing him to choose the ground on which he was to fight, the next day he marched against him, having (as sure of victory) first detached bodies of horse to intercept those of the Moors that should fly when defeated; for no general was more prudent than he for the destruction of his enemy. He then led his troops against the king of Adel, and spurring his horse, was already in the midst of the Moorish army before the most active of his soldiers had time to follow him. The Abyssinians, as usual, threw themselves like madmen upon the Moors, at the sight of the king's danger. The king of Adel was defeated with little resistance: that unfortunate prince himself was slain upon the spot, and the greatest part of his army destroyed (after they thought themselves safe) by the ambushes of fresh horse the king had placed in the rear before the battle.

The three children of the king of Adel, and his brother, who had all been in the engagement, seeing the great inferiority of their troops, and terrified at the approaching fate of their country, loaded themselves with the most valuable of their effects (which, in token of their humility, they carried upon their heads, shoulders, and in their hands), came with these presents before the king, who was sitting armed at the door of his tent, and, without further apology, or assurance given, threw themselves, as is the custom of Abyssinia, at his feet, with their foreheads in the dust, entreating pardon for what had hitherto been done amiss; submitting to him as his subjects,

professing their readiness to obey all his commands, provided only that he would proceed no further, nor waste and destroy their country, but spare what still remained, which was, for the most part, the property of the Arabian merchants, who had done him no injury.

The king seemed little disposed to credit these assurances. He told them plainly, "That they, and all Ethiopia, knew the time was when they were under his dominion, paid him the same tribute, and owed him the same allegiance, as the rest of his subjects; that neither he, nor his predecessors, at that time, had ever oppressed them, but returned them present for present, gold for gold, apparel for apparel, and dismissed them contentedly home whenever they came to pay their duty to him: That lately, from supposed weakness in him, when he was young in the beginning of his reign, and encouraged by the great addition of their brethren, who flocked to them from Arabia, they had, without provocation, thrown off their allegiance to him, upbraiding him as a eunuch, fit only to take care of the women of their seraglio, with many such taunting messages, equally unworthy the majesty and memory of a prince like him: That, could this be passed over, still there was a crime that all the blood of Adel could not atone for: They had, without provocation, murdered his priests, burnt their churches, and destroyed his defenceless people in their villages, merely from a vain belief that they were too far off to be under his protection: That, to punish them for this, he was now in the midst of their country, and, if his life was spared, never would he turn his back upon Adel, while he had ten men with him capable of drawing their swords. He, therefore, ordered them to return, and expect the approach of his army."

The two eldest children and the brother were so struck with the fierce manner and countenance with which the king spoke, that they remained perfectly silent. But the youngest son (a youth of great spirit, and who, with the utmost difficulty, had been forced by his parents to fly after the battle) answered the king with great resolution :—

" It is a truth known to the whole kingdom, that Adel has never belonged to any sovereign on earth but to ourselves. Violence and power, which destroy and set up kingdoms, have at times done so with ours; but that you are not otherwise, than by these means, king of our conntry, our colour, stature*, and complexion, sufficiently shew. We have been free, and were conquered; we have now attempted to regain our freedom, and we have failed: We have not been inferior to you in every kind of civility, receiving you and your predecessors when you came into our country, singing before you, and rejoicing, because we knew that you had always among you men of great worth and bravery.

" As to the accusation against us, that we robbed the Christians, you yourself see the riches of our country, which we get by our own industry and commerce, whilst the Abyssinians were naked shepherds and robbers. In the days of your predecessors, a handful of us would have chased an army of them, and it would be so now, were it not for the personal valour and conduct of you, their prince. But you, better than any one, can be the judge of this; and I can appeal to you, how often they have been upon the point of deserting you, in return for all the victories

* The Moors, in general, are much squarer, stouter-made men, than the Abyssinians.

and riches they have shared with you; while there is not a Moor in Adel but would have willingly died in the presence of such a prince as you. It is then you, not your army, that we fear; we know perfectly the value of both. You have already enjoyed all the merit and profit of conquest; but utterly destroying a defenceless people is unworthy of any king, and still more of a prince of your character."

The king, without any sign of displeasure at the freedom of this speech, answered him calmly: "Words and resolutions like these occasioned your father to lose his life in battle. I come not to argue with you what you are to do, nor did I send for you to preach to you; but if the queen your mother, the rest of your father's family, and the principal people who, after your father's death, are now to govern Adel, do not, by to-morrow evening, surrender themselves to me at my tent-door, as you have done, I will lay the province of Adel waste, from the place where I now sit, to the borders of the ocean."

This unpromising interview with the king was faithfully communicated by the young princes to their mother, earnestly desiring her to trust the king's mercy, and to throw herself at his feet the next morning, without reserve. But those, who had been the persuaders of the war (for the late king of Adel was but a weak prince), reckoned themselves in much greater danger with Amda Sion than was the royal family. They, therefore, agreed to try their fortune again in battle, binding themselves to live and die with each other, by mutual oaths and promises. They also sent to the princes this resolution, by an old enemy of Amda Sion, persuading them to make their escape as soon as possible, and come and head their forces that were then raised, and ready to conquer or die together, when the family should be out of the enemy's hands.

The king, well informed of what had passed, decamped immediately from the station where he was, exceedingly irritated; and, having passed the great river called Aco, he took post in the town of Marmagab. The next day, dividing his army, he sent two bodies by different routes into the enemy's territories, with a strict command to leave nothing undestroyed that had the breath of life; he himself, with the third division, burning and laying waste the whole country before him, proceeded straight to the place where he heard the chiefs of Adel were assembling an army. There he found some troops, mostly infantry, who kept a good countenance, and seemed perfectly prepared and disposed to engage him. But an immense multitude of useless people covered the plain, old men, women, and children, with the parents, wives, and families of those he had already slain; and these were determined, with the remnant of their countrymen, to conquer this invader, or perish.

The king, upon perceiving this strange mixture, halted for a time in great surprise and astonishment. He could not penetrate into the motive of assembling such an army; and sending a party of horse, as it were, to disperse them, he found everywhere a stout resistance; soldiers well provided with swords and shields, and a multitude of archers, who rained showers of arrows upon him, while the women, with clubs, poles, stakes, and stones, damped the ardour of his soldiers, who, when they first charged, scarcely expected resistance. The king, seeing the battle every minute become more doubtful, and having but few troops, began to repent that he had weakened his army by detachments; he instantly dspatched orders to them to advance, and fall upon the enemy in the nearest direction possible. At the same time, he himself made an extraordinary effort with his horse, but all in

vain; and he found, on every side, people who presented themselves willingly to death, but who would not quit their station while they had power to defend themselves in it.

Conspicuous above all these for his dress, and youth, his many acts of valour, and his graceful figure, was the young king of Wypo, who, encouraging his troops, presented himself wherever Amda Sion was in person. The remarkable resistance that this young prince made, soon drew the attention of the king of Abyssinia; who, sheathing his sword, took a bow in his hand, and, as my historian says, choosing the broadest arrow he could find, struck the young hero through the middle of his neck, so that, half being cut through, his head inclined to one shoulder, and soon after he fell dead among his horse's feet.

This sight was one just calculated to strike such an army as this with terror. They immediately turned their backs, and, unluckily falling in with the two detachments marching to the king's relief, they were all cut to pieces, to the number of 5000; a great proportion of which were women and aged persons, unskilled in war, further than as they were prompted by a long sufferance of injuries, accumulated now to a mass, that made them weary of life. My historian further says, that three only of the Moorish army escaped. On the king's side many principal officers were killed; and there was scarcely one horseman that was not wounded. Amda Sion, therefore, when speaking of this campaign, after his return, among his nobility at Shoa, used to say, "Deliver me from fighting with old women!" alluding to this battle, where he was in the greatest danger. The fate of the unfortunate king of Wypo was particularly hard. He had lately married the king of Adel's daughter; and it was the saying for him, and his marriage, that lost the fa-

vourable opportunity of fighting the Abyssinians, when the army was in despondency upon the king's being taken ill of the fever.

The next campaign the king began with a march first to Sassogade, where he assisted at the celebration of the feast of St John the Baptist; and he gave orders, that day, to raze all the Mahometan mosques to the ground, to destroy all the grain, burn the villages, and put the people to the sword, which was executed accordingly. The king then decamped, and, passing the great river (Zorat), came to the country of the Oritii, and took up his quarters there. The people of this province were in the very worst reputation for cruelty, and hatred of the Christian name. They were perpetually making incursions into the Christian villages; and those that fell alive into their hands, they either castrated, cut off their noses or ears, or otherwise mangled them.

The king, to vindicate the severity he was about to exercise, ordered all those people, who had suffered in this manner, to be collected and brought before him. The number appeared very considerable; and having inquired in what occupations they had been employed, they answered, that their business was to cut down wood, draw and fetch water, and some of them to take care of the Moorish women. Violently affected with this, he called his principal officers, and commanded them, that, when he decamped with his army the next day, small parties should remain in ambush on each side of the town. The king, early in the morning, marched out with sound of trumpet; and the Moors, thinking the army gone, returning to their houses, were set upon by the parties, and destroyed.

The next place the king came to was Haggara, where he staid eight days, and celebrated there the

feast of the Cross; surrounding his camp with palisades, as if he was to stay there a considerable time. Here he made his soldiers deposit all their plunder, leaving it under the care of a weak guard, and marched out with sound of trumpet, as if going upon some expedition. There was a large body of troops in ambush, and the Moors, concealed in woods, and hiding-places, attacked the intrenchment as soon as the king was gone, and had forced the palisades, when they were everywhere surrounded by the parties left behind, and all cut to pieces, excepting the old men and women, whose noses and lips the king ordered to be cut off, by way of retaliation, and then dismissed them. Great store of bows, good arms and clothing, were taken here, lately brought from Arabia for the use of the confedrates.

The king now turned his face homewards, marched in seven days to Begul in the Sahara, and thence sent a message to the governor of Ifat, commanding him to send him all those Christians who had apostatized from their faith in his or his brother's time; with notice, that, if he did not comply, he would put him and all his family to death, and give his command to another. The king ordered these apostates, when delivered, to be severely whipped, and, fettering them with heavy irons, imprisoned them.

From Begul the army marched to Waz, thence to Gett, and from Gett to Harla, still laying waste the country. From Harla they marched five days to Delhoya, being determined to make a severe example of this place, because the inhabitants had killed the governor the king had left with them, and, making large fires for the purpose, had burnt and tormented the Christians residing there. He came, therefore, upon this town, surrounded it in the night, and after

putting men, women, and children to the sword, razed it to the ground.

From Delhoya he proceeded to Degwa, from thence to Warga, which he treated in the same manner as Delhoya, and then entered the province of Dawaro, where he understood that Hydar, governor of that province, with Saber-eddin, and a very valuable convoy coming to him, under their conduct, from Shoa, were intercepted by Hydar's people, and their guard cut to pieces. Instead, therefore, of proceeding to Shoa, as his intention was, he encamped at Bahalla, and there kept the feast of Christmas, laying the whole province, by parties, under military execution; and hearing there that Joseph, governor of Serca, was in understanding with those of Dawaro, he put him in prison, carrying off all his horses, asses, mules, and a prodigious quantity of other cattle, which he drove before him, and ended his expedition by his entry into Shoa.

This is the Abyssinian account of the reign of their prince Amda Sion, a little abridged, and made more conformable to the manner of writing English history. The historian, contrary to the usual practice, gives no account of himself; but he seems to have lived in the time of Zera Jacob, about a hundred years after this. Though he wrote in Shoa, his book is in pure Geez, there being scarcely an Amharic word in it.

There are three things which I would now observe; not because they are peculiar to the reign of Amda Sion; but because, though first mentioned here, they are uniformly confirmed throughout the whole Abyssinian history.

The first is, that the king of Abyssinia is in all matters, ecclesiastical and civil, supreme; that he punishes all offences committed by the clergy, in as absolute and direct a manner as if these offences were

committed by a layman. Of this, the treatment of Honorius is an example, who made use only of spiritual weapons against offences, that surely deserved the fullest censure of every church.

With whatever propriety this sentence might have been inflicted upon individuals, perhaps without any bad consequence to the public in general, the law of the land, in Abyssinia, could not suffer it to be inflicted on their king, because very bad effects must have followed it towards the common-weal. Excommunication there is really a capital punishment, if executed with rigour. It is a kind of *interdictio aquæ et ignis;* for you yourself are expressly prohibited from kindling a fire, and every body else is laid under a prohibition from supplying either fire or water. No one can speak, eat, or drink with you, enter your house, or suffer you to enter his. You cannot buy, nor sell, nor recover debts. If, under this situation, you should be violently slain by robbers, no inquiry is made into the cause of your death, and your body is not suffered to be buried.

I would submit now to the judgment of any one, what sort of government there would be in Abyssinia, if a priest were suffered to lay the king under such interdict or restriction. The kings of that country do not pretend to be saints; indeed, it may be said, they are the very contrary, leading very free lives. Pretences are never wanting, and it is only necessary to find a fanatical priest, (which, God knows, is not a rarity in that country), to unhinge government perpetually, and throw all into anarchy and confusion. But nothing of this kind occurs in their history, though the bigotted Le Grande, and some of the Jesuits, less bigotted than he, have asserted, that such a practice prevailed in the Abyssinian church, to show its conformity with

the church of Rome; an assertion which is contradicted in almost every prince's reign.

The second thing I shall observe is, that there is no ground for that prejudice so common in the writers concerning this country, who say that these people are Nomades, perpetually roving about in tents. If they had ever so little reflected upon it, there is not a region in the world where this is less possible than in Abyssinia; a country abounding with mountains, where every flat piece of ground is, once a-day, during six months rain, cut through by a number of torrents, sweeping cattle, trees, and every thing irresistibly before them; where no field, unless it has some declivity, can be sown, nor even passed over by a traveller, without some danger of being swept away, during the hours of the day when the rain is most violent. In such a country, it would be impossible for 30,000 or 40,000 men to encamp from place to place, and to subsist without some permanent retreat. Accordingly, they have towns and villages perched upon the pinnacles of sharp hills and rocks, which are never thought safe, if commanded by any ground above them; in these they remain, as we do in cities, all the rainy season. Nor is there a private person (not a soldier) who has a tent more than in Britain. In the fair season, the military encamp, in all directions, cross the country, either to levy taxes, or in search of their enemy; but nothing in this is peculiar to Abyssinia; in most parts of Africa and Asia they do the same.

The third particular to be observed here is, that, in this prince's reign, the king's sons were not imprisoned in the mountain. For Saif Araad was present with his father at the defeat of Saleh, king of Mara, and yet the mountain of Geshen was then set apart as a prison. The Itchegue of Debra Libanos was ba-

nished there; from which I infer, that after the massacre of the royal family by Judith, on the mountain of Damo, and the flight of the prince Del Naad, to Shoa, the king's children were not confined, till long after their restoration, and return to Tigré; as will appear in the sequel.

Amda Sion died a natural death at Tegulat in Shoa, after a reign of 30 years, which were but a continued series of victories, no instance being recorded of his having been once defeated *.

Saif Araad succeeded his father Amda Sion; and it would seem, that in his time (from 1342 to 1370) all was peaceable on the side of Adel, as nothing is mentioned relative to war. Indeed, if the increase of trade and power in that corner of Abyssinia arose from the troubles and want of security which the merchants laboured under in Arabia, we cannot but suspect, from a parity of reasoning, that the violent manner in which the war had been carried on by Amda Sion, must have occasioned a great many inhabitants to repass the Straits, and return to their own homes.

At this time, news was brought from Cairo, that the Soldan had thrown the Coptic patriarch, Marcus, into prison. There was then a constant trade carried on between Cairo and Abyssinia, though the desert; and also from Cairo and Suakem on the Red Sea. Besides, great caravans, formerly composed of Pagans, now of Mahometans, passed from west to east, in the same manner as in ancient times, to buy and

* The history of the war of Adel, under this prince, is the first portion of regular Abyssinian history which is preserved. The annals of the succeeding reigns, from the year 1342 to the year 1434, a period of 92 years, are lost; and nothing remains of them but the following fragments, extracted from the general Chronicle.—E.

disperse India goods through Africa. Saif Araad, not having it in his power to give the patriarch other assistance, seized all the merchants from Cairo, and sent horse to interrupt and terrify the caravans. As the cause of this was well known, and that the patriarch was in prison for the sake only of extorting money from him, people on all sides exclaimed against the bad policy of the Soldan; who thereupon ordered Abuna Marcus to be set at liberty, without any other condition, than that he should make peace with Saif Araad on the part of Egypt; which was done through the mediation of that prelate.

We know nothing of Weden Asferi, who succeeded his father Saif Araad, and reigned ten years; yet his name, which signifies *lover of war*, seems to indicate an active reign. It is remarkable, that in this reign is first mentioned an æra of Abyssinian chronology, which has very much puzzled several learned writers, and the origin of which is not, perhaps, yet fully known. This is the epoch, called that of Maharat, or Mercy, which Scaliger and Ludolf have called the æra of grace. Scaliger says, he has toiled much before he found out what it was; and, I fear, his toil has not been blessed with all the success we could wish. That it is not the æra of redemption, is plain from a hundred trials; nor of the conversion, nor of Dioclesian. What it alludes to we know not; but it is first quoted in the Abyssinian history in this reign, and answers to the year 1348 of Christ; but from what event it had its origin we cannot positively say, nor further, than that all which Scaliger has said concerning it is merely visionary.

Weden Asferi was succeeded by his brother David, Saif Araad's second son. This prince's reign is remarkable in the annals of the church of Abyssinia: because, at this time, a piece of the true cross, on

which our Saviour died, was brought hither from Jerusalem; in memory of which great event, the king ordered the sacerdotal vest, or capa, which was before plain, to be embroidered with flowers.

This king, after reigning twenty-nine years, one day viewing a favourite, but vicious horse, received so violent a kick upon his head, that it fractured his skull. He died upon the spot, and was buried in the great island of Dek, in the lake Dembea, or Tzana.

David was succeeded by his eldest son Theodorus. He is called Son of the Lion, by the poet, in the Ethiopic encomium upon him, still extant in the liturgy. A miracle is mentioned to have happened (which would lead us to believe that he was a saint), during the celebration of his festival by his mother, the queen Sion Mogassa *. She had contented herself with providing great quantities of flesh for the feast; but, to make it more complete, the heavens, in a shower, supplied it with store of fine fish, ready roasted.

He was buried in the church of Tedbaba Mariam in Amhara, after having reigned three years. There must have been something very brilliant that happened under this prince; for though the reign is so short, it is of all others the most favourite epoch in Abyssinia. It is even confidently believed, that he is to rise again, and reign in Abyssinia for a thousand years: that in this period all war is to cease, and every one, in fulness, to enjoy happiness, plenty, and peace. Foolish as the legend is, and distant the time,

* Peace be upon thee, king of the Agaazi nation, Theodorus, son of the Lion (Weld anbasa). Thy festival shall be commemorated this day with the slaughter of sheep and oxen, with which alone thy mother, Sion Mogass, kept it not; for the clouds also dropt fishes. Vid. Orig. apud Lud. Hist. Ethiop. L. II. c. vi.—E.

it was the source of great trouble and personal danger to me, as will be mentioned afterwards. What we know for certain in this prince's history is, that he abrogated the treaty of partition, made by Icon Amlac in favour of the Abuna Tecla Haimanout and his successors, by which one-third of the kingdom of Abyssinia was for ever to be set apart as a revenue for the Abuna. He wisely modified so excessive a provision, reserving to the Abuna, for his maintenance, a sufficient territory in every province of the kingdom. It is still judged immoderate, and has suffered many defalcations under later princes, who, perhaps, not acting upon the principles of Theodorus, have not been commended by posterity in the manner he has been.

Theodorus was succeeded by Isaac his brother, second son of David. In his reign the Falasha, who, since their overthow in the time of Amda Sion, had been quiet, broke out into rebellion. We do not know the particulars, but apprehend some injustice was at that time done, or attempted, against the Jews; for 24 judges, 12 from Shoa and 12 from Tigre (the number having been doubled when there were two king's reigning *), were of a different opinion, and would not comply with the king's will; who thereupon deprived them all of their office. The king, coming upon the army of the Falasha in Woggora, entirely defeated them at Kossogué; and, in memory thereof, built a church on the place, and called it Debra Isaac; which remains to this day.

Isaac reigned near 17 years, and was a prince of great piety and courage. The annals of his reign, probably

* That is, while the family of Zagué reigned in Tigré, and that of Solomon in Shoa, before the restoration.

during the troublesome times that followed, have been lost, and with them great part of his achievements.

Isaac was succeeded by his son Andreas, who reigned only seven months, and they were both buried at Tedbaba Mariam.

This prince was third son of David, and succeeded his nephew. He reigned four years, and took for his inauguration name, Haseb Nanya. The successor was Sarwe Yasous, the son of Tecla Mariam; he reigned only four months: His inauguration name was Maharak Nanya. He has been omitted in some of the lists of the kings.

Sarwe Yasous was succeeded by his brother Amda Yasous, whose inauguration name was Badel Nanya. He was second son of Tecla Mariam, and reigned nine months *.

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* The annals of the reigns, from Amda Sion to Zera Jacob, being lost, we can give no account of the political situation of Adel and Abyssinia for the space of a century. Many struggles for power or independence must have taken place in that obscure period. The fragment of the history of Amda Sion is a small portion of the national story, which the care of a patriotic monk laboured to preserve in the unhappy days of David III. A body of men whose duty obliges them to read, seldom fail to write, in their own manner, an account of important events, in which they are personally concerned. The disastrous reign of David involved all ranks in the general calamity. Every church in Abyssinia was burnt, by the enemies of its religion and independence, and its history shared the fate of the library of Alexandria. —F.

ZARA JACOB.

From 1434 to 1468.

Sends Ambassadors from Jerusalem to the Council of Florence—First entry of the Roman Catholics into Abyssinia, and dispute about Religion—King persecutes the remnants of Sabaism and Idolatry—Mahometan Provinces rebel, and are subdued—The King dies.

THESE very short reigns were followed by one of an extraordinary length. Zara Jacob, fourth son of David II. succeeded his nephew, and reigned 34 years, having, at his inauguration, taken the name of Constantine. He is reckoned in Abyssinia to have been another Solomon; and a model of what the best of sovereigns should be. From what we know of him, he seems to have been a prince, who had the best opportunity, and the greatest inclination, to be instructed in the politics, manners, and religion of other countries.

A convent had been long before this established at Jerusalem for the Abyssinians, which he, in part, endowed, as appears by his letters still extant *, written to monks of that convent. He also obtained from the Pope † a convent for the Abyssinians at Rome, which to this day is appropriated to them, though it

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* Vid. Ludolf, lib. 3. No. 29. I have this letter at length prefixed to the large volume of Canons and Councils, a copy of which was sent by Zara Jacob to the monks in Jerusalem.

† St Stefano in Rotondis.

is very seldom that either there, or even at Jerusalem, there are now any Abyssinians. By his desire, and in his name, ambassadors (i. e. priests from Jerusalem) were sent by Abba Nicodemus, the then superior, who assisted at the counsel of Florence; where, however, they adhered to the opinion of the Greek church about the proceeding of the Holy Ghost, which created a schism between the Greek and Latin churches. This embassy was thought of consequence enough to be the subject of a painting in the Vatican; and to this picture we owe the knowledge of such an embassy having been sent.

The mild reign of the last Soldan of Egypt seems greatly to have favoured the disposition of Zara Jacob, in maintaining an intercourse with Europe and Asia. And it is for the first time now, in this reign, that we read of a dispute upon religion with the Franks, or Frangi; a name which afterwards became more odious and fatal to whomsoever it was applied. Abba George is said to have disputed before the king upon some point of his religion, and to have confuted his opponent even to conviction. We are not informed of the name of Abba George's antagonist, but he is thought to have been a Venetian painter *, who lived many years after in Abyssinia, and, it is believed, died there. From this time, however, in almost every reign, there appear marks of a party formed in favour of the church of Rome, which probably had its first rise from the Abyssinian embassy to the council of Florence.

Although the established religion in Abyssinia was that of the Greek church of Alexandria, yet many different superstitions prevailed in every part of the

* Francisco de Branco Leon.

country. On the coast of the Red Sea, as well as the Ocean, that is in the low provinces adjoining to the kingdom of Adel, the greatest part of the inhabitants were Mahometans; and the conveniences of trade had occasioned these to disperse themselves through many villages in the high country, especially in Woggora, and in the neighbourhood of Gondar. Dembea on the south, and the rugged district of Samen on the east, were crowded with many deformed sects; while the people of the low valleys, towards Nubia, the Agows at the head of the Nile, and those of the same name, though of a different nation and language, at the head of the Tacazzé, in Lasta, were, for the greatest part, Pagans, i. e. of the old religion of Sabeans, worshipping the planets, stars, the wind, trees, and the like. But a more abominable worship than this seemed predomimant among some of the Agows at the source of the Nile, and the people bordering upon Nubia, who adored the cow and serpent for their gods, and supposed that, by the latter, they could divine all that was to happen to them in futurity.

Whether it was, that a long war had thrown a veil over these abuses, or whether (which is more probable) a spirit of toleration had still prevailed in this country, which had, at first, been converted to Christianity without blood-shed, it is not easy at this time to say. Their history does not mention, that, before the reign of this prince, idolatry had been considered as a capital crime, or judicially inquired into, and tried as such. An accusation, however, at this time, being brought against some families for worshiping the cow and serpent, they were, by the king's order, seized, and brought before himself, sitting in judgment, with the principal of his clergy, and his officers of state, with whom he associated some stran-

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gers, lately come from Jerusalem; a custom which prevails to this day. These criminals were all capitally convicted, and executed. A proclamation from the king followed, declaring, that any person who did not, upon his right hand, carry an amulet, with these words, "I renounce the devil for Christ our Lord," should forfeit his personal estate, and be liable to corporal punishment.

It has been the custom of all Pagan nations to wear amulets upon their arms, and different parts of their bodies. From the Gentiles this usage was probably first learned by the Jews. Amulets were adopted by the Mahometans, but, till now, not worn in Abyssinia by any Christians.

These executions, which at first consisted of seven people only, began to be repeated in different places, and at different times. The person employed as inquisitor, and the manner in which this examination was made, tended to make it still more odious. Amda Sion, the Acab Saat, was the man to whom this persecution was committed. He was the king's principal confident; of very austere manners; neither shaved his head, nor changed his clothes; had no connection with women, nor with any great man in court; never saw the king but alone; and, when he appeared abroad, was constantly attended by a number of soldiers, with drums and trumpets, and other equipage, not at all common for a clergyman. He had under him a number of spies, who brought him intelligence of any steps taken in idolatry or treason; and after being, as he supposed, well informed, he went to the house of the delinquent, where he first refreshed himself and his attendants, then ordered those of the house he came to, and all that were with them, to be executed in his presence.

Among those that suffered were the king's two sons-

in-law, married to his daughters Medehan Zamidu, and Berhan Zamidu, having been accused by their wives, the one of adultery, the other of incest. They were both put to death in their own houses, in a very private and suspicious manner. This execution being afterwards declared by the king in an assembly of the clergy and states, certain priests, or others, from Jerusalem, in public condemned this procedure of the king, as contrary to law, sound policy, and the first principles of justice; which seems to have had such effect, that we hear no more of these persecutions, nor of Amda Sion the persecutor, during the whole of this reign.

The king now turned his thoughts upon a nobler object, which was that of dividing his country into separate governments, assigning to each the tax it should pay, at what time, and in what manner, according to the situation and capacity of each province. The prosperity of the Moorish states, from the extensive trade constantly carried on there, the bad use they made of their riches, by employing them in continual rebellions, made it necessary that the king should see and inquire into each person's circumstances, which he proposed to do, as was usual, before the time of their several investitures.

The chief of the rich district of Gadai was the first called on by the king, as it is on this occasion that considerable presents (seldom less than two years rent of the province) are given, about one half to the king, the other among his courtiers. There was, at this period, a Moorish woman of quality in court, called the queen of Zeyla. She had been brought to the palace, with a view that the king should marry her; but he disliking her for the length, as is said, or some other defect, in her fore-teeth, had married her to a nobleman.

This injury had sunk very deep in the breast of the queen of Zeyla, though she was only nominally so, having been expelled from her kingdom before her coming into Abyssinia. But it happened that she was sister to Mihico, son of Mahomet, chief of Gadai, whom she earnestly persuaded to stay at home, and she succeeded so far, as not only to prevail upon him to be absent, but also to withdraw himself entirely from his allegiance.

At this very time, the king was informed by a faithful servant, a nobleman of Hadea, that the chief of Gadai had long been meditating mischief, and endeavouring to prevail with the king of Adel to march with his army, while great part of the principal people of Hadea, whom he had seduced, were to fall, on the opposite side, upon Dawaro and Bali.

The king, however, received certain accounts from Adel, that all was quiet there; and inquiring who of his Moorish servants were of the conspiracy in Hadea, he found them to be Goodalu, Alarea, Ditho, Hybo, Ganzè, Saag, Gidibo, Kibben, Gugulzé, and Haleb. As there were still forces enough in the province to resist this confederacy, the king, instead of levying an army against them, thought the proper way was to send them a governor, who should divide the interest and strength of the enemy. There was then an uncle of Mihico remaining in exile at Dejan*, whither he had been sent formerly into banishment at the instance of his nephew; but he still preserved the command of a small district, called Bomo, as well as the good inclinations of his own subjects of Gadai, who held his memory in great veneration. The king, therefore, sent for this governor of Bomo, and, set-

* One of the steep mountains used for prisons.

ting before him the behaviour of his nephew, gave him the investiture of his government, with many presents both useful and honourable; and, having ordered some troops from Amhara to attend him, he dismissed him, to punish and expel his nephew from the province of Gadai.

The fair of Adel was nigh, and thither go all the inhabitants of Bali and Dawaro. It was at this time the conspirators of Hadea had agreed to fall upon the provinces; while, probably, those at the fair had been likewise destined to cut off the inhabitants which might be found there. To counteract these designs, the king, by proclamation, expressly forbade any of the inhabitants of Bali, or Dawaro, to go to the fair, but all to join the governor of Bomo, who no sooner presented himself in his district, than the people of all ranks flocked to him and submitted.

Mihico saw himself undone by this address of the king, of which he was quite uninformed. He fled immediately with his family, endeavouring, if possible, to reach Adel; and having come the length of Bawa Amba, a high mountain, where is one of the narrowest and most difficult passes between the high country and the Kolla, he there strewed about, in different places, all the riches that he had brought along with him, in hopes that his pursuers, wearied by the time they came there, should, by the difficulty of the ground, and the booty everywhere to be found, be induced to proceed no further. But this stratagem did not succeed; for he was so closely followed that he was overtaken and slain; his head, hands, and feet were cut off, and immediately sent to the king, who, after public rejoicings, gave the government of Gadai to the person, who first informed him of Mihico's conspiracy, and confirmed the governor of Bomo in the province of Hadea likewise, which he made here-

ditary in his family. In order also to be more in readiness to suppress such insurrections for the future, he gave his Christian soldiers lands adjacent to each other, forming a line all along the frontiers of the Mahometan provinces of Bali, Fatigar, Wadge, and Hadea, that they might be ready at an instant to suppress any tumult in the provinces themselves, or resist any incursions from the kingdom of Adel.

The king now set about fulfilling another duty of his reign, that of repairing the several churches in Abyssinia, which had been destroyed in the late war by the Mahometans, and of building new ones, which it is their constant custom to vow and to erect where victories had been obtained over an infidel enemy. While thus employed, news were sent him from the patriarch of Alexandria, that the church of the Virgin had been destroyed at that city by fire. Full, therefore, of grief for this misfortune, he immediately founded another in Abyssinia, to repair that loss which Christianity had suffered in Egypt.

Being now advanced in life, he would willingly have dedicated the remainder of it to these purposes, when he was awakened from his religious employments by alarm of war. The rebels of Hadea, by changing their chief, had not altered their dispositions to rebel, and seeing the king given to other pursuits, they began to associate and to arm. The governor whom the king had created after the death of Mihico, gave the king a very late notice of this, which he dissembled, as he was the queen Heleno's father: but having, under pretence of consecrating the church of St Cyriacos, assembled a sufficient number of men whom he could trust, he made a sudden irruption into the rebel provinces before they had united their forces. The first that the king met to oppose him

was an officer of the rebel governor of Fatigar, who imagined he was engaging only the van of a separate body of Zara Jacob's troops, not believing him to be yet come up in person with so small a number. But being undeceived, he bestirred himself so courageously, that he reached the king's person, and broke his lance upon him; but, in return, received a blow from the lance of the king, which threw him to the ground; at the sight of which his whole army took flight, but were overtaken and put to the sword almost to a man; nor was the king's loss considerable, his number being so small.

Upon this defeat, Hiradin, the governor's brother, declared his revolt, and resolved to fight the king at the passage of the river Hawash. Zara Jacob, much offended at this fresh delinquency, sent an officer, called Han Degna, who found him at the watering-place, not suspecting an enemy; and, before he could put his army in order, he was surrounded, slain, and his head sent to the king, who rejoiced much to see it, it being brought to him on Christmas day.

After this the king collected his dead, and buried them with great honour and shew of grief. He then summoned the governor of Hadea, who professed himself willing to submit his loyalty and conduct to the strictest inquiry. Above all the reasons which hindered him from attending the king, one was known to be, that the queen was, not without cause, suspected to favour the Mahometans, being originally of that faith herself, and, therefore, for fear of revealing his secret to the enemy, the king did not choose to make her father, the governor of Hadea, partaker in his expedition, but, from jealousy to the queen, ordered him to stay at home. Notwithstanding which it was found, that all in his government were in their

allegiance, and ready to march upon the shortest notice, had the king required it; therefore he extended his command over the conquered provinces, in room of the rebel governors whom he had removed.

BÆDA MARIAM.

From 1468 to 1478.

Revives the Banishment of Princes to the Mountain —War with Adel—Death of the King—Attempts by Portugal to discover Abyssinia and the Indies.

Bæda Mariam succeeded to the throne (as his historian says) against his father's inclination, after having received much ill usage during the earlier part of his life, of which this was the occasion. His mother took so violent and irregular a longing to see her son king, that she formed a scheme, by the strength of a party of her relations and friends, trusting to the weakness of an old man, to force him into a partnership with his father. Examples of two kings, at the same time, and even in this degree of relation, were more than once to be found in the Abyssinian annals; but these times were now no more. A strong jealousy had succeeded to an unreasonable confidence, and had thrown both the persons and pretensions of the heirs-apparent of this age to as great a distance as was possible.

The queen, whose name was Sion Magas, or the Grace of Sion, first began to tamper with the clergy,

who, though they did not absolutely join her in her views, shewed her, however, more encouragement than was strictly consistent with their allegiance.—From these she applied to some of the principal officers of state, and to those about the king, the best affected to her son and his succession. These, aware of the evil tendency of her scheme, first advised her by every means to lay it aside; and afterwards, seeing she still persisted, and afraid of a discovery that would involve her accomplices in it, they disclosed the matter to the king himself, who resented the intention so heinously, that he ordered the queen to be beaten with rods till she expired. Her body afterwards was privately buried in a church, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, not far from Debra Berhan*.

Nothing had hitherto appeared to criminate the young prince. But it was soon told the king, that after the death of the queen, her son, Bæda Mariam, had taken frankincense and wax-tapers from the churches, which he employed, at stated times, in the observation of the usual solemnities over his mother's grave. The king, having called his son before him, began to question him about what he had heard; while the prince, without hesitation, gave him a full account of every circumstance, glorying in what, he said, was his duty, and denying that he was accountable to any man on earth for the marks of affection which he shewed to his mother.

The king, considering his son's justification as a reproach on himself for cruelty, ordered the prince, and, with him, his principal friend, Meherata Christos, to be loaded with irons, and banished to the top

* Another church on a hill, one of the quarters of Gondar. It signifies the hill of Glory, or Brightness.

of a mountain; and it is hard to say where this punishment would have ended, had not the monks of Debra Kosso and Debra Libanos, and all those of the desert (who thought themselves in some measure accomplices with his mother), by exhortations, pretended prophecies, dreams and visions, convinced the king, that Providence had decreed unalterably, that none but his son, Bæda Mariam, should succeed him. To this ordinance the old king bowed, as it gave him a prospect of the long continuance of his family on the throne of Abyssinia.

Zara Jacob was no sooner dead, than his son, Bæda Mariam, began to apply himself seriously to the affairs of government. From the reign of Judith (in the tenth century), when so many of the princes of the royal family were massacred, the custom of sending the royal children to confinement on the top of a mountain had been discontinued. These children all lived at home with their respective fathers and mothers, like private persons; and the kings seemed to connive at abolishing their former practice, for no mountain had been yet chosen as a substitute to the unfortunate Damo. The disagreement between Zara Jacob and his queen, with the cause of it, and the prince's frankness and resolution, seemed to point out the necessity of reviving the salutary severity of the antient laws. Bæda Mariam gave orders, therefore, to arrest all his brethren, and send them prisoners for life to the high mountain of Geshen, on the confines of Amhara and Begemder, which ever after continued the state-prison for the royal children, till a slaughter, like to that made upon Mount Damo, was the occasion, as we shall see, of deserting Geshen likewise.

The king applied himself next to measures for the better government of his country. He ordered a

general pardon to be proclaimed to all, who, by the severity of the late reign, lay under sentence of death, banishment, or any other punishment; and, convoking the states of the kingdom, he met them with a cheerfulness and openness which inspired confidence into every rank, while, at the same time, he filled all the places he found vacant, or that he thought proper to change, with men of the greatest integrity. He then reviewed the whole cavalry that were in his service, which he distributed into bodies, and stationed them in places where they could be readiest called, to execute those designs he had then in contemplation.

The next year the king went to Debra Libanos, in Shoa. It was, however, observed, that his preparations were not such as were usual in these short journies, nor such as were made in peaceable times. On the contrary, orders were sent to the borders of Tigré to receive the royal army, which was soon to arrive in those parts. The rumour of this was quickly spread abroad, and affected all the neighbouring states, according to their several interests. Mahomet, king of Adel, was the first that took the alarm. Though a kind of peace had subsisted for several years between Adel and Abyssinia, yet inroads had been made from each country into the other; and these might have served them as pretexts for war, had that been the inclination of the times. Yet, as both countries happened to be disposed for peace, these outrages passed unnoticed.

But, to prevent surprise upon this last movement of the troops, the king of Adel thought he had a right to be informed of Bæda Mariam's intentions, and, with this view, he sent some of the principal people of his country as ambassadors, under pretext of congratulating the king upon his accession to the throne. They met the king in Shoa, and had carried

with them very considerable presents. They were received in a very distinguished manner; and the presents which Bæda Mariam returned to the king of Adel were nothing inferior to those he accepted. After having entertained the ambassadors several days with feasting and diversions, he confirmed a peace, under the same duties upon trade that had formerly subsisted.

The king of Dancali also, old, infirm, yet constant in his attachment to the Abyssinians, was not without his inquietudes, though he was not afraid they intended to attack his poor territory with an army. He dreaded lest the army in its march should drink up that little quantity of water which remained to him in summer, and without which his kingdom would become uninhabited. It is a low, sandy desert, lying on the Red Sea, just where the coast, after bearing a little to the east of north from Suez to Dancali, makes an elbow, and stretches nearly east, as far as the Straits of Babelmandeb. It has the mines of fossile salt immediately on the north and north-west, a desert part of the province of Dawaro to the south, and the sea on the north. But it has no port, excepting a spacious bay, with tolerable anchorage, called the Bay of Bilur *, in lat. 13° 3′, and corruptly, in vulgar maps and writings, the Bay of Bayloul.

The kingdom of Dancali is bounded on the east at Azab by part of the kingdom of Adel, and the myrrh country. The king is a Mahometan, as are all his subjects. They are called Taltal, are all black, and

* Bilur, in the language of Samhar, signifies fossile salt; if it is covered with any mineral, so as to be either red, or green, it is, in this latter case, applied often to emeralds, and green rock-crystal.

only some of them woolly-headed; a circumstance which probably arises from a mixture with the Abyssinians, whose hair is long. There are but two small rivers of fresh water in the whole kingdom; and even these are not visible above ground in the hot season, but are swallowed up in the sand, so as to be dug for when water is wanted. In the rainy season, these are swollen by rain falling from the sides of the mountains and from the high lands of Abyssinia, and then only they run with a current into the sea. All the rest of the water in this country is salt, or brackish, and not fit for use, unless in absolute necessity and dry years. Even these sometimes fail, and they are obliged to seek, far off in the rainy frontiers of Abyssinia, water for themselves, and pasture for their miserable goats and sheep.

When the Indian trade flourished, this prince's revenue arose chiefly from furnishing camels for the transport of merchandise to all parts of Africa. Their commerce is now confined to the carrying bricks of solid, or fossile salt, dug from pits in their own country, which, in Abyssinia, pass instead of silver currency. These they deliver at the nearest market in the high lands at a very moderate profit, after having carried them from the sea-side through the dry and burning deserts of their own country, at the great risk of being murdered by Galla.

The presents sent to Bæda Mariam from Dancali did not make a great figure when compared with those of Adel. They consisted of one horse, a mule, a shield of elephant's hide, a poisoned lance, two swords, and some dates. Poor as these presents were, they were much more respected than those of Adel, because they came from a loyal heart; while the others were from a nation, distinguished every year by some premeditated action of treachery and blood-

shed. The king, having first sent for the Abuna, Imarhana Christos, and called the ambassadors of Dancali and Adel into his presence, declared to them, that neither of these states was to be the scene of war, but that he was instantly to march against the Dobas *, whose constant inroads into his country, and repeated cruelties, he was resolved no longer to suffer. He required the ambassadors to warn their masters to keep a strict neutrality, otherwise they would be infallibly involved in the same calamities with that nation.

Lent being now near, the king returned to Ifras, there to keep his fast, and distributed his horse on the side of Ambassanet, having sent orders to the governor of Amhara to join him immediately, who was then at Salamat besieging a party of rebels upon Mount Gehud, which signifies the Mountain of Manifestation. It was the intention of the king, that the troops of Amhara, Angot, and Tigré should press upon the enemy from the high country, while he with his own forces (chiefly horse) should cut off their retreat to the plains of salt; and it was here that the King of Dancali was afraid that they would interfere with his fresh water.

This prince kept strictly his promise of secrecy made to Bæda Mariam, while the king of Adel observed a very different line of conduct; for he not only discovered the king's intention, but invited the Dobas to send their wives, children, and effects into Adel, while his troops should cut off the king's provision, and fight him wherever they saw it could be done with advantage. The plan was speedily embra-

* A race of very barbarous people, all shepherds, having great substance, and much resembling the nations of Galla. They are Pagans.

ced. Twelve clans of Dobas marched with their cattle, as privately as possible, for Adel; but the king's intelligence was too good, and his motions too rapid, to allow their schemes to be carried into execution. With a large body of horse, he took possession of a strong pass, called Fendera; and when that unhappy people, fatigued with their march, and encumbered with baggage, arrived at this spot, they were cut to pieces without resistance, and without distinction of age, or sex.

The king, at the beginning of this campaign, declared, that his intention was not to carry on war with the Dobas as with an ordinary enemy, but totally to extirpate them as a nuisance; and, to shew himself in earnest in the declaration, he now made a vow never to depart from the country till he had ploughed and sown the fields, and eaten the crop on the spot with his army. He, therefore, called the peasants of two small neighbouring districts, Wadge and Ganz, and ordered them to plough and sow that part; which having seen done, the king went to Axum, but returned again to the Dobas, by the feast of the Epiphany *. That cruel, restless nation, saw now the king's real intent was their utter destruction, and that there was no possibility of avoiding it but by submission. This prudent conduct they immediately adopted; and, great part of them renouncing the Pagan religion, so satisfied Bæda Mariam, that he decamped from their country, after having, at his own expence, restored to them a number of cattle equal to that which he had taken away, having also given up, untouched, the crop, which had been sown, and recompensed the peasants of Wadge and Ganz for their corn and labour.

* The first journey of the Abyssinian king to Axum was always signalized by particular ceremonies and great rejoicing.—E.

Having resolved to chastise the king of Adel for his treacherous conduct, he retired southward into the provinces Dawaro and Ifat; and, as if he had had no other views but those of peace, he crossed over to Begémder, where he directed the Abuna to meet him with his son Iscander, of whom his queen, Romana Werk *, had been lately delivered. From this, he proceeded to Gojam, everywhere leaving orders with the proper officers to have their troops in readiness against his return; and, having delivered the young prince to Ambasa David, governor of that province, he proceeded to Gimbota, a town lying on the banks of the Nile, which, in honour of his son's governor, he changed to David Harasa †. Having thus settled the prince to his mind, he sent orders to the army in Tigré and Dawaro to advance into the southmost frontier of Adel. He himself returned by the way he went to Gojam, and collecting the troops, and the nobility who flocked to him on that occasion, he marched straight for the same country.

Whilst the king was occupied in these warlike preparations, a violent commotion arose among his clergy at home. In the reign of Zara Jacob, a number of strangers, after the council of Florence, had come into Abyssinia with the Abuna Imaranha Christos.—Among these were some monks from Syria, or Egypt, who had propagated a heresy which had found many disciples. They denied the consubstantiality of Christ, whom they admitted to be perfect God and likewise perfect man, but maintained that what we call his humanity was a precious substance, or nature, not composed of flesh, blood, and arteries (like ours), but infinitely more noble, perfect, peculiar to, and only existing in himself. An assembly of the clergy was cal-

* The pomegranate of gold.

† The station of David.

led, this heresy condemned; and those, who had denied the perfect manhood of our Saviour, were put to death by different kinds of torture. Some were sent to die in the Kolla; others exposed, without the necessaries of life, to perish with cold on the tops of the highest mountains *.

There was another motive of discontent which appeared in that assembly, and which affected the king himself. A Venetian, whose name was Branco Leon, was one of the strangers that arrived in Ethiopia at the time above mentioned. He was a limner by profession, and exceedingly favoured by the late king, for whom he had painted, with great applause, pictures of Abyssinian saints, for the decoration of the churches. It happened that this man was employed on an altar-piece for the church of Atronza Mariam; the subject was a common one in Italy, Christ in his mother's arms; where the child, according to the Italian mode, is held in his mother's left arm. This is directly contrary to the usage of the East, where the left hand is reserved for the purpose of washing the body when needful, and is therefore looked upon as dishonourable; so much so indeed, that at table the right hand only is put into the plate.

The fanatic and ignorant monks, heated with the last dispute, were fired with rage at the indignity which they supposed was offered to our Saviour. But the king, struck with the beauty of the picture, and thinking blood enough had been already shed upon religious scruples, was resolved to humour the spirit of persecution no farther. Some of the ringleaders of these disturbances privately disappearing, the rest saw

* This imaginary substance is called Bâheri, which is literally a pearl or gem, but has been applied to signify fine substance or nature. It is common among them to confound nature and person.—E.

the necessity of returning to their duty; and the picture was placed on the Altar of Atronsa Mariam, and there preserved, notwithstanding the devastation of the country by the Moors, under the reigns of David III. and Claudius, till many years afterwards, together with the church, it was destroyed by an inroad of the Galla *.

In the mean time, the army from Dawaro had entered the kingdom of Adel under Betwudet * Adber Yasous, and, expecting to find the Moors quite unprepared, they had begun to waste every thing with fire and sword. But it was not long before they found the inhabitants of Adel ready to receive them, and perfectly instructed of the king's intentions, from the moment he left Dawaro, to go to meet his son in Gojam. Indeed, it could not be otherwise, from the multitude of Moors constantly in his army, who, though they put on the appearance of loyalty, never ceased to have a warm heart towards their own religion and countrymen. Advanced parties appeared as soon as the Abyssinian army entered the frontiers; and these were followed by the main body in good order, determined to fight their enemy before they had time to ravage the country.

A battle immediately followed; very bloody, as might be expected from the mutual hatred of the soldiers, from the equality in numbers, and the long experience each had in the other's manner of fighting. The battle, often on the point of being lost, was as often retrieved by the personal exertion of the Moorish officers, upon whom the loss principally fell. Sidi

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* Vide MS. Chronicle of Abyssinia.

† The Betwudet is an officer that has nearly the same power as Ras. There were two of these; and both being slain at one battle, as we shall see in the sequel, the office grew into disuse, as unfortunate.

Hamed, the king's son, the chiefs of Arar, Nagal, Telga, Adega, Hargai, Gadai, and Kumo, were slain, with several other principal men, who had either revolted from the king of Abyssinia, or whom friendship to the king of Adel had brought from the opposite coast of Arabia.

The king was still advancing with diligence, when he was overtaken by an express, informing him that his queen Romana was delivered of another prince, christened by the name of Anquo Israel. Upon which good tidings he halted, at once to rest and feast his army; and, in the middle of his festivity, an express from Adber Yasous brought him news of the complete victory over the Moors, and that there was now no army in Adel of consequence enough to keep the field. Hereupon the king detached a sufficient number of troops to reinforce Adber Yasous in Adel, and continued himself recruiting his army, and making greater preparations than before, that, during the first of the season, he might utterly lay waste the whole Moorish country, or so disable them, that they might, for many years, be content to enjoy peace under the condition of becoming his tributaries.

While planning these great enterprises, the king was seized with a pain in his bowels, whether from poison or otherwise is not known, which occasioned his death. Having, a few moments before he died, recollected that his face was turned on a different side from the kingdom of Adel, he ordered himself to be shifted in his bed, and placed so as to look directly towards it (a token how much his heart was set upon its destruction), and in that posture he expired.

He was a prince of great bravery and conduct; very moderate in all his pleasures; of great devotion; zealous for the established church, but steady in resisting the monks, and other clergy, in all their attempts towards persecution, innovation, and indepen-

dency. Many stories have been propagated of his inclination to the Catholic religion, and of his aversion to having an Abuna from Egypt; and it is said, that during his whole reign, he obstinately persisted in refusing to suffer any Abuna in his kingdom. But these are fables invented by the Portuguese priests, who came into Abyssinia some time afterwards, and forged anecdotes to serve their own purposes; for, unless we except the story of the Venetian, Branca Leon, there is not a word said of any connection Bæda Mariam ever had with the Catholics that then were in his country; and even that was a connection of his father's. As to the other story, we find in history, that the Abuna had been in the country ever since his father Zara Jacob's time; and that, at his desire, the Abuna, Imaranha Christos, came and received, in the field of battle, large donations in gold, almost as often as the king gained a victory *. Bæda Mariam died at the age of forty, after reigning ten years, which were spent in continual war; during the whole course of which he was successful; and might (if he had lived) have very much weakened the Moorish states, and prevented the terrible retaliation that fell afterwards, from that quarter, upon his country.—It will be proper now to look back into the transactions in Europe, which are partly connected with the history of this kingdom.

The conquest of the north of Africa followed the reduction of Egypt; and the whole coast of Barbary was crowded with Mahometans, from Alexandria to the western ocean, and from the Mediterranean to the edge of the desert. Even the desert itself was filled with them; and trade, security, and good faith, were now everywhere disseminated in regions, a few years before the seat of murder and pillage.

* Vide MS. Annals, Vol. II. Life of B. Mariam.—E.

Tarik and his Moors had invaded Spain; Musa followed him, and conquered it. This was the consequence of the fatal violation of Count Julian's daughter. She was not seduced, but forced by the king, while in the palace, and under the protection of the queen.

A great influx of trade followed the conquest; and the religion, that contained little restraint and great indulgence, was everywhere embraced by the vanquished, who long had been Christians in name only. On the other side, the Arabs were now no longer that brutish set of madmen they were under the Khalifat of Omar. They were now eminent for their rank and attainments in every species of learning. This was a dangerous crisis for Christianity, which threatened nothing else than its total subversion. The whole world, without the help of England, had not virtue enough to withstand this torrent. That nation, the favourite weapon in the hand of Heaven for chastising tyranny and extirpating false religion, now lent its assistance, and the scale was quickly turned.

Venice, a city of fishermen, under every inconvenience, rose at that time, by unwearied industry and perseverance, to the possession of what remained of the Indian trade. It became, in a short period, the great market for the spices and perfumes of the East; and, consequently, the most considerable maritime power that had appeared in Europe for ages.

Genoa followed, but sunk, after great efforts, under the power of her rival, who remained mistress of the sea, of a large dominion upon the continent, and of the Indian spice trade, the origin and support of all her greatness.

Rhodes, and the ships of the military order of St John of Jerusalem, to whom that island belonged, greatly harassed the maritime trade carried on by the Moors in their own vessels from Alexandria, who were every day more discouraged by the unexpected

progress of these once petty Christian states. Trade again began to be carried on by caravans in the desert. Large companies of merchants from Arabia, passed in safety to the western ocean, and were joined by other traders from the different parts of Barbary while passing to the southward of them, and that with such security and expedition, that the Moors began to set little value on their manner of trading by sea, now content again with the labours and conveniences of their ancient faithful friend and servant, the camel.

Ormus, a small island in the Persian Gulf, had, by its convenient situation, become the market for the spice trade, after the discouragements it had received in the Mediterranean. All Asia was supplied from thence, and vessels, entering the Straits of Babelmandeb, had renewed the old resort to the temple of Mecca. Hence all Africa, too, was served by caravans, that never since have forsaken that trade, but continue to this day, and cross the continent, in various directions.

John I. king of Portugal, after many successful battles with the Moors, had at last forced them to cross the sea, and return vanquished to their native country. By this he had changed his former dishonourable name of Bastard, to the more noble, and much more popular one, of John the Avenger. This did not satisfy him. Assisted by some English navigators, he passed over to Barbary, laid siege to Ceuta, and speedily after made himself master of the city. This early connection with the English arose from his having married Philipina of Lancaster, sister of Henry IV. king of England, by whom he had five sons, all of them heroes, and, at the taking of Ceuta, capable of commanding armies. Henry, the youngest, scarce twenty years of age, was the first that mounted the walls of

that city in his father's presence, and was thereupon created Master of the Order of Christ; a new institution, whose sole end and view was the extirpation of the Mahometan religion.

Although every thing promised fair to John in the war of Africa, yet it early occurred to Prince Henry, that a small kingdom like Portugal could never promise to do any thing effectual against the enormous power of the Mahometans, then in possession of extensive dominions in the richest parts of the globe. The sudden rise of Venice was before his eyes, and almost happened in his own time. By applying to trade alone, she had acquired a power sufficient to cope with the stoutest of her enemies. Portugal, small as it was, merited quite another degree of respect; but poverty, ignorance, pride, and idleness, prevailed among the poor people; even agriculture itself was in a manner abandoned since the expulsion of the Moors.

Prince Henry, from his early years, had been passionately addicted to the study of what is generally known by the name of mathematics, that is, geometry, astronomy, and consequently arithmetic. He was of a liberal turn of mind, devoid of superstition, haughtiness, or passion; the Arab and the Jew were admitted to him with great freedom, as the only masters who were capable of instructing him in those sciences. It was in vain to attempt to rival Venice, in possession of the Mediterranean trade; no other way remained but to open the commerce to India by the Atlantic Ocean, by sailing round the point of Africa to the market of spices in India. Full of this thought, he retired to a country palace, and there dedicated the whole of his time to deliberate inquiry. The ignorance and prejudices of the age were altogether against him. The only geography then known was that of the poets. It was the vulgar opinion of the Portuguese, that

the regions within the tropics were totally uninhabited, scorched by eternal sun-beams, while boiling oceans washed these burning coasts; and, therefore, they concluded, that every attempt to explore them was little better than downright madness, and a braving, or tempting, of Providence.

But, on the other hand, he found great materials to comfort him, and to make him persist in his resolution. For Greek history, to which he then had access, had recorded two instances, which showed that the voyage was not only possible, but that it had been actually performed, first by the Phœnicians, under Necho king of Egypt, then by Eudoxus, during the time of Ptolemy Lathyrus, who, after doubling the southern cape of Africa, arrived in safety at Cadiz. Hanno, too, had sailed from Carthage through the Straits, and reached to 25° of north latitude in the Atlantic Ocean. In more modern times, even in the preceding century, Macham, an Englishman, returning from a voyage on the west coast of Africa, was shipwrecked on the island of Madeira, together with a woman whom he tenderly loved. After her death he became weary of solitude; and having constructed a bark, or canoe, with which he paddled over to the opposite coast, he was taken by the natives, and presented to the Caliph as a curiosity. And the Normans of Dieppe had, as a company, traded in 1364, not fourscore years before Prince Henry's time, as far as Sierra de Leona, only 7° from the line.

The prince's humanity to his Moorish prisoners had likewise been rewarded by substantial information. They reported, that some of their countrymen, of the kingdom of Sus, had advanced far into the desert, carrying their water and provisions along with them on camels; that, after many days travel, they came to mines of salt, and, having loaded their cargoes, they

proceeded till they came within the limits of the rains, where they found large and populous towns, inhabited by a people totally black and woolly-headed, who reported that there were many countries even beyond them, occupied by numerous and warlike tribes. To complete all, Don Pedro, Henry's brother, returning from Venice, brought along with him from that city a map, on which the whole coast of the Atlantic Ocean was distinctly traced, and the southern extremity of Africa was represented to be a cape surrounded with the sea, which joined with the Indian Ocean.

No sooner was the prince thus satisfied of the possibility of a passage to India round Africa, than he set about constructing the necessary instruments for navigation. He corrected the solar tables of the Arabs, and made some alterations in the astrolabe: For, strange to tell! the quadrant was not then known in Portugal, though, a hundred years before, Ulughbeg had measured the sun's height at Samarcand in Persia, with a quadrant of about 400 feet radius, the largest ever constructed, if, indeed, the size of it be not exaggerated.

Henry, who, by his liberality and affability, had drawn together the most learned mathematicians, and ablest pilots, of the age, now proposed to reduce his speculations to practice. Many ships had sailed in the course of his disquisitions, and ten years had now elapsed before the prince, after all his encouragement, could induce the captains to proced farther than Cape Non, or, thirty leagues further, to Cape Bojador. To this their courage held good; after which, the fear of fiery oceans reviving in their minds, they returned, exceedingly satisfied with their own perseverance and abilities. Henry, though greatly hurt at this behaviour, dissembled the low opinion which he had formed of both. He contented himself with proposing to

them different reasons and rewards; and urged them to repeat their voyages; which, however, constantly ended in the same disappointment. And, it is probable, a much longer time might have been spent in these miscarriages, had not accident, or rather providence, stept in to his assistance.

John Gonsalez and Tristan Vaz, two gentlemen of his bed-chamber, seeing the impression this behaviour had made on the prince, and having obtained a small ship from him, resolved to double Cape Bojador, and discover the coast beyond it. Whether the fiery oceans might not have presented themselves to these gentlemen, I know not; but a violent storm forced them to sea. After being tossed about in perpetual fear of shipwreck for several days, they at last landed on a small island, which they called Port Santo. These two navigators possessed the true spirit of discovery. Far from giving themselves up for lost in a new world, or content with what they had already done, they set about making the most diligent observation of every thing remarkable on this small spot. The island itself was barren; but, examining the horizon all around, they observed a black fixed spot there, which never either changed its place or dimensions. Satisfied, therefore, that this was land, they returned to the Infant with the news of this double discovery.

Three vessels were speedily equipped by the prince; two of them given to Vaz and Arco, and the third to Bartholomew Perestrello, gentleman of the bed-chamber to Don John, his brother. These adventurers were far from disappointing his expectations; they arrived at Port Santo, and proceeded to the fixed spot, which they found to be the island of Madeira, wholly covered with wood; an island that has ever since been of the greatest use to the trade of both Indies, and which has remained to the crown of Portugal, after

the greatest part of their other conquests in the east are lost. John I. was now dead, and Edward had succeeded him. The Infant Henry, however, still continued the pursuit of his discoveries with the greatest ardour.

Giles D'Anez, stimulated by the success of the last adventurers, put to sea with a resolution to double Cape Bojador close in shore, so as to make his voyage a foundation for pushing farther the discovery; and, being lucky in good weather, he fairly doubled the Cape; and, continuing some leagues farther into the bay to the south of it, he returned with the same good fortune to Portugal, after having found the ocean equally navigable on the other side as on this; and that there was no foundation for those monstrous appearances, or difficulties, mariners till now had expected to find there.

The successful expedition round Cape Bojador being soon spread abroad through Europe, excited a spirit of adventure in all foreigners; the most capable of whom resorted immediately to Prince Henry, from their different countries, which further increased the spirit of the Portuguese, already raised to a very great height. But there still was a party of men, who, not susceptible of great actions themselves, dedicated their time with some success to criticising the enterprises of others. These blamed Prince Henry, because, when Portugal was exhausted both of men and money, by a necessary war in Africa, he had chosen that very time to launch out into expences and vain discoveries of countries, in an immense ocean, which must be useless, because incapable of cultivation. And though they did not advance, as formerly, that the ocean was boiling among burning sands, they still thought themselves authorised to assert, that these countries must, from their situation under the sun, be so hot as to make all the dis-

coverers black, and also to destroy all vegetation. Futile as these reasons were, at another time they would have been sufficient to have blasted all the designs of Prince Henry, had they made half the impression upon the king that they did upon the minds of the people. Portugal was then only growing to the pitch of heroism to which it soon after arrived, their spirit being continually fostered by a long succession of wise, brave, and well-informed princes.

Edward, the reigning prince, disdained to give any answer to such objections, otherwise than by doubling his respect and attention for his uncle Henry. To encourage him still further, he conferred upon himself for life the sovereignty of Madeira, Port Santo, and all the discoveries he should make on the coast of Africa; and the spiritual jurisdiction of the island of Madeira, upon his new Order of Christ, for ever.

These voyages of discovery were constantly persevered in. Nugno Tristan doubled Cape Blanco, and came to a small river, which, from their finding gold in the hands of the natives, was afterwards called Rio del Oro; and here a fort was afterwards built by the Portuguese, called Arguim. I would not, however, have it supposed, that gold is the produce of any place in the latitude of Cape Blanco. It was brought here from the black nations, far to the southward, to purchase salt from the mines, which are in this desert near the Cape. The sight of gold, better than any other argument, served to calm the fears, and overcome the scruples, of those who hitherto had been adversaries to these discoveries.

In the year 1445, Denis Fernandes first discovered the great river Senega, the northern banks of which are inhabited by the Asenagi Moors, whose colour is tawny, while the southern, or opposite banks, belong to the Yaloffes, or negro nation, the chief market for

the gum arabic. Passing this river he discovered Cape Verde; and, to his inexpressible satisfaction, though now in the midst of the torrid zone, he found the country abounded with large rivers, and the most luxuriant verdure. He found a civil war in the nation of the Yaloffes. Bemoy, a prince of that nation, had, in a minority, intruded himself into the throne of his brothers (to whom he was but half blood), by the address of his mother. The eldest of the three brothers preserved the shadow of government, and seemed to favour the usurpation. Bemoy had improved that interval, by cultivating the Portuguese friendship to the uttermost. He promised every thing; a place to build their city on the continent, which the king very much desired; and to be a convert to Christianity, the only thing the king wished still more. His eldest brother dying, the king was briskly pressed by the two younger, and steadily supported by the Portuguese, from whom he had borrowed large sums; but still appearing to trifle with the day of his conversion, and the day of his payment, the king ordered the Portuguese to withdraw from his country, and leave him to his fortune. The loss of a battle with his brothers soon reduced him to the necessity of flying across the deserts to Arguim, and thence to Portugal, with a number of his followers. He was received by the king of Portugal, with all the honours due to a sovereign prince, and baptised at Lisbon, the king and queen being his sponsors.

Great festivals and illuminations were made at this acquisition to Christianity; and Bemoy appeared at those festivals, as the greatest ornament of them, performing feats of horsemanship never before practised in Portugal. The modesty and propriety of his conversation and behaviour in private, and the great dignity and eloquence which he displayed in public, began to give the Portuguese a very different

idea of his clan, from that which they had formerly entertained.

In the mean time, the king went rapidly on with the preparations that were to establish Bemoy in his kingdom; and the festivals were no sooner terminated, than Bemoy found a large army and fleet ready to sail with him, the command of which, unhappily for him and the expedition, was given to Tristan d'Acugna, a soldier of great experience and courage, but proud, passionate, and cruel; the disagreeable name of Bisagudo* having already been fixed upon him by his countrymen.

The fleet performed the voyage, and the troops landed happily. They were, by their number and value, far from any apprehension of opposition. The general began immediately to lay the foundation of a fort, without having sufficiently attended to its unhealthy situation. The spot which was chosen being low and marshy, fevers began early to make havoc among his men, and the work, of course, went on proportionally slower. The murmurs of the army against his obstinacy in adhering to the choice of this place, and his fear that he himself should be left alone governor of it, made d'Acugna desperate; when one day, taking his pleasure on board a ship, and having had some words with Bemoy, he stabbed him with his dagger to the heart, so that he fell dead without uttering a word. The fort was abandoned, and the army returned to Portugal, after having cost little less than all Prince Henry's discoveries together had done.

But heaven rewarded the wisdom of the king, by a discovery, the consequences of which more than over-

* The literal translation of this is "doubly sharp," or "sharp to a fault;" a character he had gained in Portugal.

paid him, in his mind, for his loss. Prince Henry's principal view was to discover the way to India by the southern cape of Africa; but this, as yet, was not known to be possible. In order to remedy a disappointment, if any such happened in this sea-voyage, another was attempted by land. We have seen that the common track for the Indian trade was from the east to the west sea, through the desert, the whole breadth of Africa. Prince Henry had projected a route parallel to this to the southward, through a Christian country: For it had been long reported by the Christians from Jerusalem, that a number of monks resorted thither, subjects of a Christian prince in the very heart of Africa, whose dominions were said to reach from the east to the west sea. Several of these monks had been met at Alexandria, whose patriarch had the sole right to send a metropolitan into that country. These facts, though often known, had been as often forgot by the western Christians. Marco Paulo*, a Venetian traveller, had much confused the story, by saying he had met, in his travels through Tartary, with this prince, who, they all agreed, was a priest, and called Joannes Presbyter, Prete Janni, or Prester John.

The king of Portugal, therefore, chose Peter Covillan and Alphonso de Paiva, for his ambassadors. Covillan was a man qualified for the undertaking. He had several times been employed by the late king in very delicate affairs, out of which he extricated himself with great credit, by his address and secrecy. He was, besides this, in the vigour of his age, bold, active, and perfectly master of all sorts of arms; modest and cheerful in conversation, and, what crowned

* See Marco Paulo's Travels into Tartary.

all, had happily a great readiness in acquiring languages, which enabled him to explain himself whereever he went, without an interpreter; an advantage to which, above all others, we are to ascribe the success of such a journey.

It was at the court of Bemoy that the first certain account of the existence of this Christian prince was procured. This people, on the west coast of Africa, reported, that, inland to the eastward, were many powerful nations and cities, governed by princes totally independent of each other; that the eastermost of these princes was called prince of the Mosaical people, who were neither pagans nor idolaters, but professed a religion compounded of the Christian and Jewish.

It seems plain that this intelligence must have been brought by the caravans; or, indeed, the case may have been, that the language of the Negroes had of old, been a dialect of Abyssinian. The black Ethiopians above Thebes are reported to have bestowed much care upon letters; and they certainly reformed the hieroglyphics, and probably invented the Syllabic alphabet, which we know is used in Abyssinia to this day, and which was probably the first among the nations. Be that as it will, the various names which the Senega went by were all Abyssinian words. Senega comes from Asenagi, which is Abyssinian, and signifies *carriers*, or *caravans;* Degui, *a stone*, or *rock;* Angueah, a tree of that name; Anzo, *a crocodile;* and, at the same time, all these are names of Abyssinian rivers.

It was at Benin, another Negro country, that the king again received confirmation of the existence of a Christian prince, who was said to inhabit the heart of Africa to the south-east of this state. The people of Benin reported him to be a prince exceedingly powerful; that his name was Ogané, and his king-

dom about 250 leagues to the eastward. They added, that the kings of Benin received from him a brass cross and a staff, as their investiture. It should seem that this Ogané is but a corruption of Jan, or Janhoi, the title the eastern Christians had given to the king of the Abyssinians. But it is very difficult to account for the knowledge of Abyssinia in the kingdom of Benin, not only on account of the distance, but likewise, because several of the most savage nations in the world, the Galla and Shankalla, occupy the intervening space.

The court of Abyssinia, as we shall see afterwards, did, indeed, then reside in Shoa, the south-east extremity of the kingdom, and, by its power and influence, probably might have pushed its dominion through these barbarians, down to the neighbourhood of Benin on the western ocean. But all this I must confess to be a simple conjecture, of which, in the country itself, I never found the smallest confirmation.

Amha Yasous (prince of Shoa) being at court, on a visit to the king at Gondar, in the years 1770 and 1771, and the strictest friendship subsisting between us, every endeavour possible was used on my part to examine this affair to the bottom. A number of letters were written, and messengers sent; and, at this prince's desire, his father directed, that all the records of government should be consulted to satisfy me. But never any thing occurred, which gave room to imagine the prince of Shoa had ever been sovereign of Benin, nor was the western ocean, or that state, known to them in my time. Yet the country alluded to could be no other than Abyssinia; and, indeed, the crooked staff, as well as the cross, corroborate this opinion, unless the whole was an invention of the Negroes, to flatter the king of Portugal.

That prince was resolved no longer to delay the

discovery of the markets of the spice-trade in India, and the passage over land, through Abyssinia, to the eastern ocean. He, therefore, as has been said, dispatched Covillan and De Paiva to Alexandria, with the necessary letters and credit. They had likewise a map, or chart, given them, made under the direction of Prince Henry, which they were to correct, or to confirm, according as it needed. They were to inquire what were the principal markets for the spice, and particularly the pepper trade in India, and what were the different channels by which this was conveyed to Europe; whence came the gold and silver, the medium of this trade; and, above all, they were to inform themselves distinctly, whether it was possible to arrive in India by sailing round the southern promontory of Africa.

From Alexandria these two travellers proceeded to Cairo; thence to Suez, the port on the bottom of the Red Sea, where, joining a caravan of western Moors, they continued their route to Aden, a rich trading town, without the Straits of Babelmandeb. Here they separated: Covillan set sail for India, De Paiva for Suakem, a small trading town and island in Barabra, the Barbaria of the ancients. What other circumstances occurred we know not; only that De Paiva, attempting his journey this way, lost his life, and was never more heard of.

Covillan, more fortunate, passed over to Calicut and Goa in India; then crossed the Indian Ocean to Sofala, to inspect the mines; next he returned to Aden, and so to Cairo, where he expected to meet his companion De Paiva; but here he heard of his death. However, he was there met by two Jews, with letters from the king of Abyssinia, the one called Abraham, the other Joseph. Abraham he sent back with letters, but took Joseph along with him again to Aden, and thence they both proceeded to Ormus in the Persian

Gulf. Here they separated, and the Jew returned home by the caravans that pass along the desert to Aleppo. Covillan, now solely intent upon the discovery of Abyssinia, returned to Aden, and, crossing the Straits of Babelmandeb, landed in the dominions of that prince, whose name was Alexander, and whom he found at the head of his army, levying contributions upon his rebellious subjects. Alexander received him kindly, but rather from motives of curiosity than from any expectation of advantage which should result from his embassy. He took Covillan along with him to Shoa, where the court then resided.

Covillan returned no more to Europe. A cruel policy of Abyssinia makes this a favour constantly denied to strangers. He married, and obtained large possessions; continued greatly in the favour of several succeeding princes, and was preferred to the principal offices; in which, there is no doubt, he appeared with all the advantage a polished and instructed mind has over an ignorant and barbarous one. Frequent dispatches from him came to the king of Portugal, who, on his part, spared no expence to keep open the correspondence. In his journal, Covillan described the several ports in India which he had seen; the temper and disposition of the princes; the situation and riches of the mines of Sofala. He reported, that the country was very populous, full of cities both powerful and rich; and he exhorted the king to pursue, with unremitting vigour, the passage round Africa, which he declared to be attended with very little danger; and that the Cape itself was well known in India. He accompanied this description with a chart, or map, which he had received from the hands of a Moor in India, where the Cape, and cities all around the coast, were exactly represented.

Upon this intelligence, the king fitted out three ships, under Bartholomew Dias, who had orders to in-

quire after the king of Abyssinia on the western ocean. Dias passed on to lat. 24° 30′ south, and there set up the arms of the king of Portugal in token of possession. He then sailed for the harbour of the Herdsmen, so called from the multitude of cows seen on land; and, as it should seem, not knowing whither he was going, came to a river, which he called Del Infante, from the captain's name that first discovered it, having, without dreaming of it, passed that formidable Cape, the object so much desired by the Portuguese. Here he was tossed for many days, by violent storms, as he came near land, being more and more in the course of variable winds; but, obstinately persisting to discover the coast, he at last came within sight of the Cape, which he called the Cape of Tempests, from the rough treatment his vessel had met in her passage round it.

The great end was now obtained. Dias and his companions had really suffered much, and, upon their return, they did not fail to do ample justice to their own bravery and perseverance; in doing which, they had conjured up so many storms and dreadful sights, that, all the remaining life of King John, nothing was talked of but this Cape: Only the king, to hinder a bad omen, instead of the Cape of Tempests, ordered it to be called the Cape of Good Hope.

Although the discovery now was made, there were not wanting a considerable number of people, of the greatest consequence, who were for abandoning it altogether. One of their reasons was curious, which, if their behaviour afterwards had not been beyond all instance heroic, would have led us to imagine their spirit of religion and conquest had both cooled since the days of Prince Henry. They were afraid, lest, after having discovered a passage to India, the depriving the Moorish states of their revenues from the

spice trade, should unite these powers to their destruction. Now, to destroy their revenues effectually, and thereby ruin their power, was the very motive which set Prince Henry upon the discovery, as worthy the Grand Master of the order of Christ; an order founded in the blood of unbelievers, and devoted particularly to the extirpation of the Mahometan religion.

Don Emmanuel, then king, having no such apprehensions, resolved to abide the consequences of a measure, the most arduous ever undertaken by any nation, and which, though it had cost a great deal of time and expence, had yet succeeded beyond their utmost expectations. It was not till after long deliberation, that he fixed upon Vasques de Gama, a man of the first distinction, remarkable for courage and great presence of mind. Before his departure, the king put into his hands the journal of Peter Covillan, with his chart, and letters of credit to all the princes in India of whom he had obtained any knowledge.

The behaviour of Vasques de Gama, at parting, was far from being characteristic of the soldier or great man. His processions and tapers savoured much more of the ostentatious devotion of a bigotted little-minded priest, and was much more calculated to depress the spirits of his soldiers, than to encourage them to the service they were then about to do for their country. It served only to revive in their minds the hardships that Dias had met off the Terrible Cape, and persuade them there was in their expedition much more danger than glory. I would not be understood as meaning to condemn all acts of devotion before military expeditions, but would have them always short, ordinary, and uniform. Every thing further inspires, in weak minds, a sense of danger, and makes them despond upon any serious appearance of difficulty.

July 4th, 1497, Vasques, with his small fleet, sail-

ed from Lisbon; and, as the art of navigation was considerably improved, he stood out to sea till he made the Canary Islands, and then those of Cape de Verde, where he anchored, took in water and other refreshments. After which, he was four months struggling with contrary winds and blowing weather, and at last obliged, through perfect fatigue, to run into a large bay called St Helena*, in lat. 32° 32′ south. The inhabitants of this bay were black, of low stature, and their language not understood, though it afterwards was found to be the same with that of the Cape. They were clothed with skins of antelopes, which abounded in the country, since known to be that of the Hottentots; their arms were the horns and bones of beasts and fishes; for they had no knowledge of iron.

The Portuguese were unacquainted with the trade-winds in those southern latitudes; and Vasques had departed for India, in a most unfavourable season of the year. The 16th of November they sailed for the Cape with a south-west wind; but that very day, the weather changing, a violent storm came on, which continued increasing; so that, although on the 18th they discovered their long-desired Cape, they did not dare or attempt to pass it. Then it was seen how much stronger the impressions were that Dias had left imprinted in their minds, than those of duty, obedience, and resignation, which they had so pompously vowed at the chapel, or hermitage. All the crew mutinied, and refused to pass farther; and it was not the common sailors only; the pilots and masters were at their head. Vasques, satisfied in his mind that there was nothing extraordinary in the danger, persevered to pass the Cape in spite of all difficulties; and the

* On the west side of the peninsula on the Atlantic.

officers, animated with the same ardour, seized the most mutinous of their masters and pilots, and confined them close below in heavy irons.

Vasques himself, taking hold of the rudder, continued to steer the ship with his own hand, and stood out to sea, to the astonishment of the bravest seamen on board. The storm lasted two days, without having in the least shaken the resolution of the admiral, who, on the 20th of November, saw his constancy rewarded by doubling that Cape, which he did, as it were, in triumph, sounding his trumpets, beating his drums, and permitting to his people all sorts of pastimes, which might banish from their minds former apprehensions, and induce them to agree with him, that the point had very aptly been called the Cape of Good Hope.

On the 25th they anchored in a creek called Angra de Saint Blaze. Soon after their arrival there appeared a number of the inhabitants on the mountains, and on the shore. The general, fearing some surprise, landed his men armed. But, first, he ordered small brass bells, and other trinkets, to be thrown out of the boats on shore, which the blacks greedily took up, and ventured so near as to take one of them out of the general's own hand. Upon his landing, he was welcomed with the sound of flutes and singing. Vasques, on his part, ordered his trumpets to sound, and his men to dance round them.

All along from St Blaze, for more than sixty leagues, they found the coast remarkably pleasant, full of high and fair trees. On Christmas day they made land, and entered a river which they called the River of the Kings; and all the distance between this and St Blaze they named Terra de Natal. The weather being mild, they took to their boats to row along the shore, on which were observed both men and wo-

men of a large stature, but who seemed to be of quiet and civil behaviour. The general ordered Martin Alonzo, who spoke several languages of the Negroes, to land; and he was so well received by the chief, or king, that the admiral sent him several trifles, with which he was wonderfully pleased, and offered, in return, any thing he wanted of the produce of his country.

On the 15th of January, in the year 1498, having taken in plenty of water, which the Negroes, of their own accord, helped them to put on board, they left this civil nation, steering past a length of coast terminated by a cape, called the Cape of Currents. There the coast of Natal ends, and that of Sofala begins, to the northward of the Cape. At this place, Gama from the south joined Covillan's track from the north, and these two Portuguese had completely made the circuit of Africa.

ISCANDER, OR ALEXANDER.

From 1478 to 1495.

Iscander declares War with Adel—Good conduct of the King—Betrayed and murdered by Za Salucé.

As soon as Bæda Mariam was dead, the history of Abyssinia informs us, that a tumultuous meeting of the nobles brought from the mountain of Geshen the queen Romana, with her son Iscander, who, upon his arrival, was crowned without opposition.

It is to be observed in the Abyssinian annals, that very frequent minorities happen. A queen-mother, or regent, with two or three of the greatest interest at court, are, during the minority, in possession of the king's person, and govern in his name. The transactions of this minority, too, are as carefully inserted in the annals of the kingdom as any other part of the subsequent government; but as the whole of these minorities are but one continued chain of quarrels, plots, and treachery, as soon as the king comes of age, the greatest part of this reign of his ministers is cancelled, as being the acts of subjects, and not worthy to be inserted in their histories; which they entitle Kebra Za Negust, the greatness or atchievements of their kings. This, however political in itself, is a

great disadvantage to history, by concealing from posterity the first cause of the most important transactions.

For several years after Iscander ascended the throne, the queen his mother, together with the Acab Saat, Tesfo Georgis, and Betwudet Amdu, governed the kingdom despotically, under the name of the young king. Accordingly, after some years sufferance, a conspiracy was formed, at the head of which were two men of great power, Abba Amdu and Abba Hasabo; but the conspirators proving unsuccessful, some of them were imprisoned, some put to death, and others banished to unwholesome places, there to perish with hunger and fevers.

The king, from his early age, had shewn a passionate desire for a war with Adel; and that prince, whose country had been so often desolated by the Abyssinian armies, omitted no opportunity of creating an interest at that court, that should keep things in a quiet state. In this, however, he was much interrupted at the time by a neighbouring chief of Arar, named Maffudi. This man, exceedingly brave, capable of enduring the greatest hardships, and a very great bigot to the Mahometan religion, had made a vow, that, every Lent, he would spend the whole forty days in some part of the Abyssinian kingdom; and to this purpose he had raised, at his own expence, a small body of veteran troops, whom he inspired with the same spirit and resolution. Sometimes he fell on one part of the frontier, sometimes upon another; slaying without mercy, all that made resistance, and driving off whole villages of men, women, and children, whom he sent into Arabia, or India, to be sold as slaves.

It was a matter of great difficulty for the king of Adel to persuade the Abyssinians, that Maffudi acted without his instigation. The young king was one who

could not distinguish Adel from Arar, or Mahomet's army from Maffudi's. He bore with great impatience the excesses every year committed by the latter; but he was overruled by his nobility at home, and his thoughts turned as much as possible to hunting, to which he willingly gave himself up; and, though but fifteen years of age, was the person, in all Abyssinia, most dexterous at managing his arms. At last, being arrived at the age of seventeen, and returning from having observed a very successful expedition made by Maffudi against his territories, he ordered Za Salucé, his first minister, commander in chief, and governor of Amhara, to raise the whole forces to the southward, while he himself collected the nobility in Angot and Tigré. With those, as soon as the rainy season was over, he descended into the kingdom of Adel.

The king of Adel had been forced into this war; yet, like a wise prince, he was not unprepared for it. He had advanced directly against the king, but had not passed his frontiers. Some inhabitants of a village called Arno, all Mahometans, but tributary to the king of Abyssinia, had murdered the governor the king had set over them. Iscander marched directly to destroy it; which he had no sooner accomplished than the Moorish army presented itself. The battle was maintained obstinately on both sides, till the troops under Za Salucé withdrew in the heat of the engagement, leaving the king in the midst of his enemies. This treason, however, seemed to have inspired the small army that remained with new courage; so that the day was as yet dubious, when Iscander, being engaged in a narrow pass, and close pressed by a Moor who bore in his hand the green standard of Mahomet, turned suddenly upon him, and slew him with a javelin; and, having wrested the colours from him as he

was falling, he, with the point of the spear that bore the ensign, struck the king of Adel's son dead to the ground, which immediately caused the Moors to retreat.

The young prince was too prudent to follow this victory in the state the army then was; for that of Adel, though it had retreated, did not disperse. Za Salucé was returning, by long marches, to Amhara, exciting all those in his way to revolt; and it was high time, therefore, for the king to follow him. But, unequal as he was in strength to the Moors, he could not reconcile it with his honour to leave their army masters of the field. He, therefore, first consulted the principal officers of his troops, then harangued his men, which, the historian says, he did in the most pathetic and masterly manner; so that, with one voice, they desired instantly to be led to the Moors. The king is said to have ranged his little army in a manner that astonished the oldest officers. He then sent a defiance to the Moors, by several prisoners whom he released. They, however, more desirous to keep him from ravaging the country, than to fight another battle, continued quiet in their tents; and the king, after remaining on the field till near noon, drew off his troops in the presence of his enemy, making a retreat which would not have been unworthy of the hero whose name he bore.

The king, in his return to Shoa, left his troops, which was the northern army, in the northern provinces, as he passed; so that he came to Shoa with a very small retinue, hearing that Za Salucé had gone to Amhara. This traitor, however, had left his creatures behind him, after instructing them what they were to do. Accordingly, the second day after Iscander's arrival in Tegulat, the capital of Shoa, they set upon him, during the night, in a small house in Aylo

Meidan, and murdered him while he was sleeping. They concealed his body for some days in a mill; but Taka Christos, and some others of the king's friends, took up the corpse, and exposed it to the people; who, with one accord, proclaimed Andreas, son of Iscander, king; and Za Salucé, and his adherents, traitors.

In the mean time, Za Salucé, far from finding the encouragement he expected in Amhara, was, upon his first appearance, set upon by the nobility of that province; and, being deserted by his troops, he was taken prisoner; his eyes were put out, and, being mounted on an ass, he was carried, amidst the curses of the people, through the provinces of Amhara and Shoa.

Iscander was succeeded by his son Andreas, or Amda Sion, an infant, who reigned seven months only.

A wonderful confusion seems to be introduced at this time into history, by the Portuguese writers. Iscander is said to die in the year 1490. He began, as they say, to reign in 1475; and this is confirmed by Ludolf: and, on all hands, it is allowed he reigned 17 years, which would have brought the last year of his reign to 1492. It seems also to be agreed by the generality of them, that Covillan saw and conversed with this prince, Iscander, some time before his death: this he very well might have done, if that prince lived to 1492, and Peter Covillan came into Abyssinia in 1490, as Galvan says in his father's memoirs. But then Tellez informs us expressly, that Iscander was dead six months before the arrival of Peter Covillan in that country. If Peter Covillan arrived six months after the death of Iscander, it must have been in the end of his son's reign, Amda Sion, who was an infant, and reigned only seven months.

Alvarez omits this king, Amda Sion, altogether, and so does Tellez; and there is a heap of mistakes

here, that shew these Portuguese historians paid very little attention to the chronology of these reigns. They call Alexander the father of Naod, when he was really but his brother; and Helena, they say, was David's mother, when in fact, she was his grandmother, or rather his grandfather's wife; for Helena, who was Iteghé in the time of David the III. had never either son or daughter *. So that if I differ, as in fact I do, four years, or thereabout, in this matter, I do not think, in those remote times when the language and manner of accounting was so little known to these strangers, that I, therefore, should reject my own account, and servilely adopt theirs; and the more so, because, as we shall see in its proper place, by the examination and comparison made by help of an eclipse of the sun, in the 18th year of Claudius's reign, in 1559, and counting from that downwards to my arrival in Abyssinia, and backwards to Iscander, that that prince must have begun his reign in 1478, and reigning 17 years, did not die till the year 1495; and, therefore, must have seen Peter Covillan, and conversed with him, if he arrived in Abyssinia so early as the year 1490.

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* The names of the queens of Abyssinia, taken at their coronation, produce here that confusion which the author often complains of. The MS. Annals sometimes attribute the great actions of one empress to another, or at least perplex their narrative by mistaking names.—F.

NAOD *.

From 1459 to 1508.

Wise Conduct of the King—Prepares for a War with the Moors—Concludes an honourable Peace with Adel.

After the unfortunate death of the young king Alexander, the people in general, wearied of minorities, unanimously chose Naod for their king. He was Alexander's younger brother, the difference of ages being but one year, though he was not by the same mother, but by the king's second wife Calliope. He was born at a town called Gabargué, the day the royal army was cut off in his father's time, and both the Betwudets perished. From this circumstance, the empress Helena and her party had used some underhand means to set him aside as unfortunate, and in his place to put Anquo Israel, Bæda Mariam's youngest son, that they might govern him and the kingdom during his non-age. But Taka Christos, their man of confidence, being, on his first declaration of such intentions, cut off by the army in Dawaro, Naod was immediately proclaimed, and brought from the mountain of Geshen.

Although Naod was in the prime of life, and vigo-

* A name corrupted from the Greek Ἀωδ, in Hebrew, Ehud.—E.

rous both in body and mind; yet such were the circumstances of the kingdom at his accession, that it seemed a task too arduous for any one man. The continual intrigues of the empress, the quantity of Mahometan gold which was circulating, on every occasion, throughout the court, the little success the army had in Adel, as also the treachery of Za Salucé, and the untimely end of the young prince, who seemed to promise a remedy to the misfortunes, had so disunited the principal people in the government, that there did not seem a sufficient number of men worthy of trust to assist the king with their councils, or fill, with any degree of dignity, the places that were vacant.

Naod was no sooner seated on the throne, than he published a very general and comprehensive amnesty. By proclamation he declared, "That any person, who should upbraid another with being a party in the misfortunes of past times, or say that he had been privy to this or to that conspiracy, or had been a favourite of the empress, or a partizan of Za Salucé, or had received bribes from the Moors, should, without delay, be put to death." This proclamation had the very best effect, as it quieted the mind of every guilty person, when he saw the king, from whom he feared an inquiry, cutting off all possible means by which it could be procured against him. Andreas, a monk, a man of quality, and of very great consequence in that country, a relation of the king by his mother, having affected to talk lightly of the proclamation, the king sent for him, and ordered the tip of his tongue to be cut off in his presence. This man, whose fault seems only to have been in his tongue, and of whom a very great character is given, lived in the succeeding reign to give the king a very distinguished proof of his attachment to his family, and love of his country.

Naod having thus prudently quieted disturbances at home, turned his thoughts to the war with Maffudi; for the king of Adel himself had made his peace, through mediation of the empress Helena; and this king, more politic than Alexander his brother, was willing to dissemble with the king of Adel, that he might fight his two adversaries singly. He, therefore, prepared a smaller army than was usual for the king to head, without suffering a Moor of any kind to serve in it.

It was known to a day when Maffudi was to enter upon his expeditions against Abyssinia. For near thirty years he had begun to burn the churches, and drive off the people and cattle on the first day of Lent; and, as Lent advanced, he, with his army, penetrated farther up the country. The Abyssinians are the strictest people in the world in keeping fasts. They are so austere, that they taste no sort of animal food, nor butter, eggs, oil, or wine. They will not, though ever so thirsty, drink a cup of water till six o'clock in the evening, and then are contented, perhaps, with dry or sour leaven bread, the best of them only making use of honey; by which means they become so weak, as to be unable to bear any fatigue. This was Maffudi's reason for invading the country in Lent, at which time scarce a Christian, through fasting, was able to bear arms.

Naod, like a wise prince, who had gained the confidence of his army, would not carry with him any man who did not, for that time, live in the same free and full manner he was used to do in festivals. He himself set the example; and Andreas, the monk, after taking upon himself a vow of a whole year's fasting for the success of the army, declared to them, that there was more merit in saving one Christian village

from slavery, and turning Mahometan, than in fasting their whole lives.

The king then marched against Maffudi; and having taken very strong ground, as if afraid of his army's weakness, the Moors, contrary to the advice of their leader, attacked the king's camp in the most careless and presumptuous manner. They had no sooner entered, however, by ways left open on purpose for them, than they found the king's army in order to receive them, and were so rudely attacked, that most of those, who had penetrated into the camp, were left dead upon the spot. The king continued the pursuit with his troops, retook all the prisoners and cattle which Maffudi was driving away, and advanced towards the frontiers of Adel, where ambassadors met him, hoping, on the part of the king, that his intention was not to violate the treaty of peace.

To this the king answered, That, so far from it, he would confirm the peace with them; but with this condition, that they must deliver up to him all the Abyssinians that were to be found in their country, taken by Maffudi in his last expedition; adding, that he would stay fifteen days there to expect his answer. The king of Adel, desirous of peace, and not a little terrified at the disaster of Maffudi, hitherto reckoned invincible, gathered together all the slaves as soon as possible, and returned them to the king.

Naod having now, by his courage and prudence, freed himself from fear of a foreign war, returned home, and set himself, like a wise prince, to the reforming of the abuses that prevailed every where among his people, and to the cultivation of the arts of peace. He died a natural death, after having reigned 13 years.

DAVID III.

From 1508 to 1540.

David, an Infant, succeeds—Queen sends Matthew Ambassador to Portugal—David takes the Field —Defeat of the Moors—Arrival of an Embassy from Portugal—Disastrous War with Adel.

The vigorous reign of Naod had, at least, suspended the fate of the empire; and, had not they still persisted in that ruinous and dangerous measure of following minority with minority, by the election of children to the throne, it is probable Abyssinia would have escaped the greatest part of those dismal calamities that fell upon it in the sequel. But the Iteghé Helena, and the Abuna Marcos (now become her creature), had interest enough, notwithstanding the obvious necessities of the times, to place David, son of Naod, upon the throne, a child of eleven years old, that they might take upon themselves the government of the kingdom; whereas Anquo Israel (third son of Bæda Mariam) was of an age proper to govern, and whom they would have preferred to Naod for the same reason, merely because he was then a child.

Besides the desire of governing, another motive operated, which, however good in itself, was very criminal in the present circumstances. A peace with Adel was what the empress Helena constantly desired;

for she could not see with indifference the destruction of her own country, far less contribute to it. She was by origin a Moor, daughter of Mahomet, governor for the king in Dawaro; and had been suspected, as early as her husband's time, of preferring the welfare of her own country to that of the kingdom of Abyssinia.

This princess, perfectly informed of the interests of both nations, seems, in her whole conduct, to have acted upon the most judicious and sensible principles. She knew the country of Adel to be, by situation and interest, perfectly commercial; that part of Africa, the opposite Arabia, and the peninsula of the Indies, were but three partners joined in one trade; they mutually consumed each others produce; they mutually contributed to export the joint produce of the three countries to distant parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa; which three continents then constituted the whole known world. When Adel was at peace with Abyssinia, then the latter became rich, from the gold, ivory, coffee, cattle, hides, and all manner of provision, procured by the former from every part of the mountainous tract above it. Trade flourished and plenty followed it. The merchants carried every species of goods to the most distant provinces in safety, equally to the advantage of Abyssinia and Adel. These advantages, so sensibly felt, were maintained by bribery, and a constant circulation of Mahometan gold in the court of Abyssinia; the kingdom, however, thus prospered. A war with Adel, on the contrary, had its origin in a violent desire of a barbarous people, such as the Abyssinians were, to put themselves in possession of riches which their neighbours had gained by trade and industry.

She saw that, even in this worst of cases, nothing utterly destructive could possibly happen to the

Abyssinians; in their inroads into that country, they plundered the markets, and got, at the risk of their lives, India stuffs of every kind, for which they would have else paid money. On the other hand, the people of Adel, when conquerors, acquired no stuffs, nor manufactures, but the persons of the Abyssinians themselves, whom they carried into slavery, and sold in Arabia, and all parts of Asia, at immense profits. Next to gold, they are the most agreeable and valuable merchandize in every part of the east; and these again, being chiefly the idle people, who delighted in war, their absence promoted the more desirable event of peace.

In this state we see that war was but another species of commerce between the two countries, though peace was the most eligible state for them both; and this the empress Helena had constantly endeavoured to maintain, but could not succeed among a people fond of war, by any other means, but by giving them a minor for their king, who was, by the law of the land, under her direction, as the country was, during his minority, under her regency.

Although this, the ordinary state of the empress's politics, had hitherto answered well between the kingdoms, when no other parties were engaged, the introduction of a third power, and its influence, totally changed that system. The Turks, an enemy not yet known in any formidable line by the southern part of Africa, or Asia, now appeared under a form that made all those southern commercial states tremble.

Selim, emperor of Constantinople, had defeated Canso el Gauri, soldan of Egypt, and slain him in the field. After a second battle, he had taken Cairo, the capital of that country; and, under the specious pretence of a violation of the law of nations, by Tomun Bey, the successor, who was said to have put

his ambassadors to death, he had hanged that prince upon one of the principal gates of his own capital; and, by this execution, totally destroyed the succession of the Mamelukes. Sinan Basha, the great general and minister of Selim, in a very few months overran all the peninsula of Arabia, to the verge of the Indian Ocean.

These people, trained to war, Mahomet had already inspired with enthusiasm, and led them to the conquest of the East. Trade and luxury had, after that, disarmed and reduced them to much the same situation as, in a former age, they had been found by Augustus Cæsar. Sinan Basha, with a troop of veterans, had, by degrees, extirpated the native princes of the country; those that resisted, by force; and those that submitted to him, by treachery; and in their place, in every principal town, he had substituted Turkish officers of confidence, strongly supported by troops of janizaries, who knew no other government but martial law.

War had now changed its form entirely under those new conquerors. Muskets, and large trains of artillery, were introduced against javelins, lances, and arrows, the only arms then known in Arabia, and on the opposite continent of Abyssinia. A large fleet, crowded with soldiers, and filled with military stores, the very name of which, as well as their destructive qualities, were till now unknown in these southern regions, were employed by the Turks to extend their conquest to India, where, though by the superior valour of the Portuguese they were constantly disappointed in their principal object, they nevertheless, in their passage outward and homeward, reinforced their several posts in Arabia, from which they looked for assistance and protection, had any enemy placed him-

self in their way, or a storm, or other unexpected misfortune, overtaken them in their return.

These janizaries lived upon the very bowels of commerce. They had, indeed, for a shew of protecting it, established custom-houses in their various ports; but they soon made it appear, that the end proposed by these was only to give them a more distinct knowledge who were the subjects from whom they could levy the most enormous extortions. Jidda, Zibid, and Mocha, the places of consequence nearest to Abyssinia on the Arabian shore, Suakem, a sea-port town on the very barriers of Abyssinia, in the immediate way of their caravan to Cairo, on the African side, were each under the command of a Turkish basha, and garrisoned by Turkish troops, sent thither from Constantinople by the emperors Selim and Soliman, his successors.

The peaceable Arabian merchants, full of that good faith which successful commerce inspires, fled everywhere from the violence and injustice of these Turkish tyrants, and landed in safety their riches and persons on the opposite shore of the kingdom of Adel. The trade from India, flying from the same enemy, took refuge in Adel among its own correspondents, the Moorish merchants, during the violent and impolitic tyranny that everywhere took place under this Turkish oppression.

Zeyla is a small island, on the very coast of Adel, opposite to Arabia Felix, without the Straits of Babelmandeb, upon the entrance of the Indian Ocean. The Turks of Arabia, though they were blind to the cause, were sensible of the great influx of trade into the opposite kingdom. They took possession, therefore, of Zeyla, where they established what they called a custom-house, and by means of that post, and gallies cruising in the narrow Straits, they laid the Indian

trade to Adel under heavy contributions, that might, in some measure, indemnify them for the great desertion their violence and injustice had occasioned in Arabia.

This step threatened the very existence both of Adel and Abyssinia; and, considering the vigorous government of the one, and the weak politics and prejudices of the other, it is more than probable the Turks would have subdued both Adel and Abyssinia, had they not in India, their chief object, met the Portuguese strongly established, and governed by a succession of kings, who had not, in any age or country, their equals; seconded by officers and soldiers, who for discipline, courage, love to their country, and affection to their sovereign, were, perhaps, superior to any troops, or any set of individuals, that, as far as we can judge from history, have ever yet appeared in the world.

It was not now a time for a woman to reign, nor, which was the same thing, to place a child upon the throne. The empress Helena saw this distinctly; but her ambition made her prefer the love of reigning to the visible necessities and welfare of her country. She knew the progress and extent of the Portuguese power in India; and saw plainly there was no prospect, but in their assistance, at once to save both Abyssinia and Adel.

Peter Covillan, sent thither as ambassador by John, king of Portugal, had, for two reigns, been detained in Abyssinia, with a constant refusal of leave to return. He was now become an object of curiosity rather than use. However, except his liberty, he had wanted nothing. The empress had married him nobly in the country; had given him large appointments, both as to profit and dignity. She now began to be sensible of the consequence of having with her a man of his

abilities, who could open to her the method of corresponding effectually both with India and Portugal in their own language, to which, as well as to the persons to whom her letters were to be addressed, she was then an utter stranger.

She had about her court an Armenian merchant, named Matthew, a person of great trust and discretion, who had been long accustomed to go to the several kingdoms of the East, upon mercantile commissions for the king and for his nobles. He had been at Cairo, Jerusalem, Ormus, Ispahan, and in the East Indies on the coast of Malabar; both in places conquered by the Portuguese, and in those that yet held out under their native Pagan princes. He was one of those factors, who, as I have already said, are employed by the king and great men in Abyssinia to sell, or barter, in the places above mentioned, such part of their revenue as are paid them in kind.

These men are chiefly Greeks, or Armenians; but the preference is always given to the latter. Both nations pay caratch, or capitation, to the Grand Signior (whose subjects they are), and both have, in consequence, passports, protections, and liberty to trade wherever they please throughout the empire, without being liable to those insults and extortions from the Turkish officers that other strangers are.

The Armenians, of all the people in the East, are those most remarkable for their patience and sobriety. They are generally masters of most of the eastern languages; are of strong, robust constitutions; of all people, the most attentive to the beasts and merchandize they have in charge; exceedingly faithful, and content with little. This Matthew Queen Helena chose for her ambassador to Portugal, and joined a young Abyssinian with him, who died in the voyage. He was charged with letters to the king, which, with the other

dispatches, as they are long, and abound with fiction and bombast rather than truth and facts, I have not troubled myself to transcribe; they are, besides, in many printed collections *.

It appears clearly from these letters, that they were the joint productions of Covillan, who knew perfectly the manner of corresponding with his court upon dangerous subjects, and of the simple Abyssinian confidents of the empress Helena, who, unacquainted with embassies or correspondence with princes, or the ill consequence that these letters would be of to their ambassador and his errand, if they happened to be intercepted by an enemy, told plainly all they desired and wished to execute by the assistance of the Portuguese. Thus, in the first part of the letter (which we shall suppose dictated by Covillan), the empress remits the description of her wants, and what is the subject of the embassy, to Matthew her ambassador, whom she qualifies as her confidential servant, instructed in her most secret intentions; desiring the king of Portugal to believe what he shall report from her to him in private, as if they were her own words, uttered immediately from her to him in person. So far was prudent; such a conduct as we should expect from a man like Covillan, long accustomed to be trusted with the secret negociations of his sovereign.

But the latter end of his dispatches (the work, we suppose, of Abyssinian statesmen) divulges the whole secret. It explains the motives of this embassy in the clearest manner; desiring the king of Portugal to send a sufficient force to destroy Mecca and Medina; to assist them with a sufficient number of ships, and to

* Vide Marmol, vol. i. cap. 37.

annihilate the Turkish power by sea; while they, by land, should extirpate all the Mahometans on their borders; and it stigmatizes these Mahometans, both Turks and Moors, with the most opprobrious names it was possible to devise.

With the first part of these dispatches, it is plain, Matthew, as an envoy, might have passed unmolested; he had only to give to the secret wishes of the empress, with which he was charged, what kind of mercantile colour he pleased. But the last part of the letter brought home to him a charge of the deepest dye, both of sacrilege and high treason, that he meditated against the Ottoman empire, whose Raya * he was; and, there can be no doubt, had these letters been intercepted and read, Matthew's embassy and life would have ended together, under some exquisite species of torture. This, indeed, he seems to have apprehended; as, after his arrival in India, he constantly refused to shew his dispatches even to the Portuguese viceroy himself, from whom, in the instant, he had received very singular favour and protection.

The king, when of age, never could be brought to acknowledge this embassy by Matthew, but, as we shall see, did constantly deny it. If we believe the Portuguese, the despair of the empress was so great, that she offered one-third of the kingdom to the king of Portugal if he would relieve her. Nothing of this kind appears in the letters; but if this offer was part of Matthew's private dispatches, we may see a reason why David did not wish to own the commission and offer as his.

Matthew had a safe passage to Dabul in India, but there his misfortunes began. The governor, taking

* A subject paying capitation.

him for a spy, confined him in close prison. But Albuquerque, then viceroy of India, residing at Goa, who had himself a design upon Abyssinia, hearing that such a person, in such a character, was arrived, sent and took him out of the hands of the governor of Dabul, where his sufferings else would not have so quickly ended. All the Portuguese cried out upon seeing such an ambassador as Matthew sent to their master; sometimes they pretended that he was a spy of the Sultan; at other times he was an impostor, a cook, or some other menial servant.

Albuquerque treated with him privately before he landed, to make his commissions known to him; but he expressly refused shewing any letter unless to the king himself in Portugal. This behaviour hurt him in the eyes of the viceroy; who was therefore disposed, with the rest of his officers, to slight him when he should come ashore. But Matthew, now out of danger, and knowing his person to be sacred, would no longer be treated like a private person. He sent to let the viceroy, bishop, and clergy know, that, besides his consequence as an ambassador, which demanded their respect, he was the bearer of a piece of wood of the true cross, which he carried as a present to the king of Portugal, and therefore he required them, as they would avoid an imputation of sacrilege, to shew to that precious relict the utmost respect, and celebrate its arrival as a festival. No more was necessary after this. The whole streets of Goa were filled with processions; the troops were all under arms; the viceroy, and the principal officers, met Matthew at his landing, and conveyed him to the palace, where he was magnificently lodged and feasted. But nothing could long overcome the prejudices the Portuguese had imbibed upon the first sight of him; and, notwithstanding he carried a piece of the true cross,

both he and it soon fell into perfect oblivion; nor was it till 1513, after he had staid three years in India, that he got leave to proceed to Portugal, by a fleet returning home, loaded with spices.

Damianus Goez, the historian, though apparently a man of good sense and candour, cannot conjecture why this Armenian was sent as an ambassador, and wishes to be resolved why not an Abyssinian nobleman. But it is obvious, from the character I have already given of him, there could be nobody in the empress's power that had half his qualifications; and, besides, an Abyssinian nobleman would not have ventured to go, as knowing very well that everywhere, beyond the limits of his own country, he would have been without protection, and the first Turk, in whose power he might have fallen, would have sold him for a slave. In no other character is any of his nation seen, either in Arabia or India, and his master has no treaty with any state whatever. Add to this, that an Abyssinian speaks no language but his own, which is not understood out of his own country; and is absolutely ignorant even of the existence of other far distant nations. But, besides, there was an Abyssinian sent with Matthew, who died; and here the wonder of Goez should cease.

The same ill fortune, which had attended Matthew in India, followed him in his voyage to Portugal. The captains of the ships contended with each other who should behave worst to him; and, in the midst of all this ill-treatment, the ship which he was on board of arrived at Lisbon. The king, upon hearing the particulars of this ill usage, immediately put the offenders in irons, where they had, probably, lain during their lives, had they not been freed by the intercession of Matthew.

David (as I have before observed) was only eleven

years old* when he was placed on the throne; and, at his inauguration, took the name of Lebna Denghel, or the Virgin's Frankincense; then that of Etana Denghel, or the Myrrh of the Virgin; and after that, of Wanag Segued, which signifies Reverenced, or Feared among the Lions, with whom, towards the last of his reign, he resided in wilds and mountains, more than with men.

During the minority, there was peace with Mahomet, king of Adel. Maffudi still continued his depredations; and by his liberality, had formed strong connections with the Turks in Arabia. In return for the number of slaves whom he had sent to Mecca, a green silk standard (that of Mahomet and of the Faith), and a tent of black velvet, embroidered with gold, were sent him by the Sherriffe, the greatest honour a Mahometan could possibly receive; and he was also made Sheikh of the island of Zeyla, which was delivering the key of Abyssinia to him.

It was not till David had arrived at sixteen years of age that the constant success of Maffudi, the honours bestowed upon him, and the gain which accrued from all his expeditions, at last determined the king of Adel to break the peace with Abyssinia, and join him. These princes, with the whole Mahometan force, had fallen together upon Dawaro, Ifat, and Fatigar; and, in one year, had driven away, and slain, about nineteen thousand Christians, subjects to the king. A terror was now spread over the whole kingdom, and great blame laid both upon the empress and the king, for sitting and looking timidly on, while the Turks and Moors, year after year, ravaged whole provinces without resistance.

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* Vide David's letter to Emanuel, king of Portugal, 1524.

These murmurs at last roused David, who, for his own part, had not suffered them willingly so long. He determined immediately to raise an army, and to command it in person. In vain the empress admonished him of his danger, and his absolute want of experience in matters of war; in vain she advised him to employ some of the old officers against the veteran Moorish troops.

The king answered that every officer of merit had been tried already, and baffled from beginning to end, so that the army had no confidence in them; that he was resolved to take his trial as the others had done, and leave the event where it ought to be left. Though the diviners all prophesied ill from this resolution of the king, the generality of the kingdom, and young nobility, flocked to his standard, rejoicing in a leader so near their own age. The middle-aged had great hopes in the vigour of his youth; and the old were not more backwards, satisfied of the weight their years and experience must give them in the councils of a young king.

Seldom a better army took the field; and the empress, from her own treasures, furnished every thing, even to superfluity, engaging all the people of consequence by giving them in the most affable manner, presents in hand, and magnificent promises of recompence hereafter. Great as these preparations were, they had not made much impression on the confederates in Adel; and already the king had put himself at the head of his army, before the Moors seemed to think it worth their while to follow him. They were, indeed, at that very time, laying waste a part of the kingdom of Abyssinia. The king, then, by quick marches, advanced through Fatigar, as if he were going to Aussa, the capital of Adel.

Between Fatigar and the plain country of Adel there is a large deep valley, through which it was

necessary the army should pass. Very steep mountains bound it on every side, whilst two openings (both very narrow) were the only passages by which it was possible to enter or go out. The king divided his army into two; he kept the best troops and largest body with himself, and sent the Betwudet with the rest, as if they intended to fight the enemy before they gained the defiles. The Moors, on the other hand, terrified at what must happen, if the king with his army marched into their defenceless country, accounted it a great escape to get into these very defiles before they were forced to an engagement. The Betwudet, who desired no more, gave them their way, and, entering the valley behind them, encamped there. The king, at the other end, had done the same, unseen by the enemy, who thought he was advanced on his march to Aussa. The Moors were thus completely hemmed in, and the king's army vastly superior. He had ordered his tents to be left standing, with a body of troops in them, and these completely covered the only outlet to the valley, whilst the Betwudet and his party had advanced considerably, and made much the same disposition.

The king drew up his troops early in the morning, and offered the enemy battle, when the whole Abyssinian army was surprised to discover a backwardness in the Moors so unlike their behaviour at former times; as well they might, when they were informed from whom that panic among the Moors came. Maffudi, a fanatic from the beginning, either really deceived by such a prophecy, or raised to a pitch of pride and enthusiasm by the honours he had received, and desirous, by a remarkable death, to deserve the rank of martyr among those of his own religion, came to the king of Adel, and told him, that, his time was now

come; that it had been prophesied to him long ago, that if, that year, he fought the king of Abyssinia in person, he was there to lose his life; that he knew, for certain, David was then present, having, with his own eyes, seen the scarlet tent (a colour which is used by the king only); he desired, therefore, the king of Adel to make the best of his way through a less steep part of the mountain, which he shewed him; to take his family and favourites along with him, and leave under his command the army to try their fortune with David. Mahomet, at no time very fond of fighting, never found himself less so than upon this advice of Maffudi's. He resolved, therefore, to follow his counsel; and, before the battle began, withdrew himself through the place that was shewn him, and was followed by a few of his friends.

At nine o'clock, when the sun began to be hot, before which the Abyssinians never choose to engage, Maffudi, judging the king of Adel was beyond danger, sent a trumpet to the Abyssinian camp, with a challenge to any man of rank in the army to fight him in single combat, under condition that the victory should be accounted to belong to that army whose champion was victorious, and that, thereupon, both parties should withdraw their troops, without further bloodshed. It does not appear whether the conditions were agreed to, but the challenge was accepted as soon as offered. Gabriel Andreas, the monk, who, in the reign of Naod, had, by the king's order, lost a part of his tongue for giving it too much licence, offered himself first to the king, beseeching him to trust to him that day, his own honour, and the fortune of the army. The king consented without hesitation, with the general applause of all the nobility; for Andreas, though a monk, was a man of great family and distinction; the most learned of the court; liberal,

rich, affable, and remarkable for facetious conversation; he was, besides, a good soldier, of tried skill and valour, and, in strength and activity, surpassed by no man in the army.

Maffudi was not backward to present himself; nor was the combat longer than might be expected from two such willing champions. Gabriel Andreas, seeing his opportunity, with a two-handed sword struck Maffudi between the lower part of the neck and the shoulder so violently, that he nearly divided his body into two, and felled him dead to the ground. He then cut his head off, and threw it at the king's feet, saying, "There is the Goliah of the Infidels."

This expression became instantly the word of battle, or signal to charge. The king, at the head of his troops, rushed upon the Moorish army, and, throwing them into disorder, drove them back upon the Betwudet, who, with his fresh troops, forced them again back to the king. Seeing no hopes of relief, they dispersed to the mountains, and were slaughtered, and hunted like wild beasts by the peasants, or driven to perish with thirst and hunger. About 12,000 of the Mahometan army are said to have been slain upon the field, with no very considerable loss on the side of the conquerors. The green standard of Mahomet was taken, as also the black velvet tent, embroidered with gold; which last, we shall see, the king gave to the Portuguese ambassador some time afterwards, to consecrate and say mass in. A vast number of cattle was taken, and with them much rich merchandise of the Indies. Nor did the king content himself with what he had got in battle. He advanced and encamped at a place where was held the first market of Adel *.

* Vide Map of Shoa.

The next day he proceeded to a town where was a house of the king, and, going up to the door, and finding it locked, he struck the door with his lance, and nobody answering, he prohibited the soldiers from plundering it, and retired with his army home, leaving his lance sticking in the door, as a sign of his having been there, and having had it in his power.

Though the king was received on his return amidst the greatest acclamations of his subjects, as the saviour of his country, the eyes of the whole nation and army were first fixed on Andreas, whose bravery had at last delivered them from that constant and inveterate scourge, Maffudi. Every body pressed forward to throw flowers and green branches in his way; the women celebrating him with songs, putting garlands on his head, and holding out the young children to see him as he passed. The battle was fought in the month of July, 1516; and, the same day, the island of Zeyla, in the mouth of the Red Sea, was taken, and its town burned by the Portuguese armament, under Lopez Suarez Alberguiera.

Neither the suspicions transmitted from India, nor the mean person of Matthew, the ambassador, seem to have made any impression upon the king of Portugal. He received him with every sort of honour, and testified the most profound respect for his master, and attention to the errand he came upon. Matthew was lodged and maintained with the utmost splendour; and, considering the great use of so powerful a friend on the African coast of the Red Sea, where his fleets would meet with all sort of provision and protection, while they pursued the Turkish squadrons, he prepared an embassy on his part, and sent Matthew home on board the fleet commanded by Lopez Suarez for India.

Edward Galvan, a man of capacity and experience, who had filled the offices of secretary of state, and ambassador in Spain, France, and Germany, arrived at that time of life when he might reasonably have expected to pass the rest of his days in ease, wealth, and honour, found himself unexpectedly chosen, at the age of eighty-six, to go ambassador from his sovereign to Abyssinia. Goez had much more reason to wonder at the ambassador fixed upon by his master, than at that of Abyssinia sent by the empress Helena to Portugal. The fleet under Suarez entered the Red Sea, and anchored at the flat island of Camaran, close on the coast of Arabia Felix, one of the most unwholesome places he could have chosen. Here Edward Galvan died; and here Suarez, most ignorantly, resolved to pass the winter, which he did, suffering much for want of every sort of provision but water; whereas twenty-four hours of any wind would have carried him to Masuah, to his journey's end; where, if he had lost the monsoon, he would still have had great abundance of necessaries, and been in the way every moment of promoting the wishes of his master.

Lopez de Segueyra succeeded the ignorant Suarez, who had returned to India. He fitted out a strong fleet at Goa, with which he entered the Red Sea, and sailed for the island of Masuah, where he arrived the 16th of April, 1520, having Matthew along with him. Upon the first approach of the fleet, the inhabitants, both of the island and town, abandoned them, and fled to Arkeeko on the main land. Segueyra having remained before Masuah a few days without committing any hostilities, there came at last to him a Christian and a Moor from the continent; who informed him that the main land, then before him, was part of the kingdom of Abyssinia, governed by an officer, called Baharnagash: they added, that the reason of their

flying at the sight of the fleet was, that the Turks frequently made descents, and ravaged the island; but, that all the inhabitants of the continent were Christians. The Portuguese general was very joyful on this intelligence, and began to treat Matthew more humanely, finding how truly and exactly he had described these places. He gave, both to the Christian and Moor that came off to him, a rich vest; commended them for having fled to Arkeeko rather than expose themselves to an attack from the Turks, but directed them to assure the people on the continent, that they too were all Christians, and under the command of the king of Abyssinia; being arrived there purposely for his service, so that they might return, whenever they should please, in perfect safety.

The next day, came down the shore the governor of Arkeeko, accompanied with thirty horsemen, and above two hundred foot. He was mounted on a fine horse, and dressed in a kind of shirt resembling that of the Moors. The governor brought down four oxen, and received in return certain pieces of silk, with which he was well pleased. A very familiar conversation followed; the governor kindly inviting the Portuguese general ashore, assuring him that the Baharnagash, under whose command he was, had already intelligence of his arrival.

In answer to his inquiries about the religion of the country, the governor told him, that in a mountain, then in sight, twenty-four miles distant, there was a convent, called the Monastery of Bisan, (which Matthew had often described in the voyage) whose monks, being informed of his arrival, had deputed seven of their number to wait upon him, whom the Portuguese general went to meet accordingly, and received them in the kindest manner.

These monks, as soon as they saw Matthew, broke out in the warmest expressions of friendship and esteem, congratulating him with tears in their eyes upon his long voyage and absence. The Portuguese general then invited the monks on board his vessel, where he regaled them, and gave to each presents that were most suitable to their austere life. On his side, Segueyra chose seven Portuguese, with Peter Gomez Tessera, auditor of the East Indies, who understood Arabic very well, to return the visit of the monks, and see the monastery of Bisan. Their short journey they very happily performed. Tessera brought back a parchment manuscript, which he received as a present from the monks, to be sent to the king of Portugal.

It was on the 24th of April that the Baharnagash arrived at Arkeeko, having before sent information of his intended visit. The Portuguese general, who never doubted but that he would come to the sea-side, pitched his tents, and spread his carpets and cushions on the ground to receive him. But it was signified to him from the Baharnagash, who was probably afraid of putting himself under the guns of the fleet, that he did not intend to advance so far, and that the governor should meet him half way. This being agreed to on both sides, they sat down on the grass.

The Baharnagash began the conversation, by telling the Portuguese, that they had, in virtue of certain prophecies, been long expected in this country; and that he, and all the officers of Abyssinia, were ready to do them every service and kindness. After the Portuguese general had returned a proper answer, the priests and monks concluded the interview with certain religious services. Segueyra then made the Baharnagash a present of a very fine suit of complete

armour, with some pieces of silk; while the Baharnagash, on his side, made the return with a very fine horse and mule.

All doubt concerning Matthew was removed at this interview; he was acknowledged as a genuine ambassador. The Portuguese now flocked to Segueyra, beseeching him to choose from among his men, some who should accompany him to the court. The first step was to name Roderigo de Lima ambassador from the king of Portugal, instead of Galvan, who was dead; and, for his suite, George de Breu, Lopez de Gama, John Scolare, secretary to the ambassador, John Gonsalvez, his factor and interpreter, Emmanuel de Mare, organist, Peter Lopez, Master John, his physician, Gaspar Pereira, and Lazarus d'Andrad, a painter. The three chaplains were John Fernandes, Peter Alphonso Mendez, and Francisco Alvarez. In this company also went Matthew, the Abyssinian ambassador, returned from Portugal, and with him three Portuguese, one called Magailanes, the other Alvaremgo, and the third Diego Fernandes.

It seemed probable, the severe blow which David had given the king of Adel, by the total destruction of his army on the death of his general, Maffudi, would have procured a cessation of hostilities to the Abyssinian frontiers, which they had not experienced during the life of that general; but it appeared afterwards, that, increased in riches and population by the great accession of power which followed the interruption of the Indian trade in Arabia by the Turkish conquest, far from entertaining thoughts of peace, they were rather meditating a more formidable manner of attack, by training themselves to the use of fire-arms and artillery, of which they had provided a quantity, and to which the Abyssinians were as yet strangers.

The king was encamped in Shoa, covering and keeping in awe his Mahometan provinces, Fatigar and Dawaro; besides which, he seemed to have no object but the conquest of the Dobas, that bordered equally upon the Moorish and Christian frontiers, and who (though generally gained by the Mahometans) were, when occasion offered, enemies to both. The Shum* of Giannamora, a small district belonging to Abyssinia, full of brave soldiers, and considerably reinforced by David for the very purpose, had the charge of bringing these barbarians to subjection, as being their immediate neighbour.

The king had afterwards advanced eastward to the frontiers of Fatigar, but was still in the southern part of his dominions. The ambassador and his retinue were landed on the north. They had to cross the whole extent of the empire, through woods and over mountains, the like of which are not known in Europe, full of savage beasts, and men more savage than the beasts themselves; intersected by large rivers, and, what was the worst circumstance, swelling every day by the tropical rains. Frequently deserts, of no considerable length, indeed, intervened, where no sustenance was to be found for man or beast, nor relief for accidental misfortunes. Yet such was the bravery of that small company, that they hesitated not a moment to undertake this enterprise. Every thing was thought easy which contributed to the glory of their king, and the honour of their country.

It was not long before this gallant company found need of all their constancy and courage; for in their short journey to the convent of St Michael (the first they attempted), they found the wood so thick that

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* Or Governor.

there was scarcely passage for either man or beast. Briars and thorns, too, of a variety of species, which they had never before seen, added greatly to the fatigue which the thickness of the woods had occasioned. Mountains presented themselves over mountains, broken into terrible precipices and ravines, by violent torrents and constant storms; their black and bare tops seemed as it were calcined by the rays of a burning sun, and by incessant lightnings and thunder. Great numbers of wild beasts also presented themselves everywhere in these dark forests, and seemed only to be hindered from devouring them by their wonder at seeing so many men in so lonely a situation. At last the woods began to grow thinner, and some fields appeared, where the people were sitting armed, guarding their small flocks of half-starved goats and kine, and crops of millet, of which they saw a considerable quantity sown. The men were black, their hair very gracefully plaited, and were altogether naked, excepting a small piece of leather that covered their middle. At this place they were met by twelve monks, four of whom were distinguished by their advanced years, and the respect paid to them by the others.

Having rested their mules and camels a short time, they again began their journey by the side of a great lake, near which was a very high mountain, and this they were too weary to attempt to pass. Full of discontent and despondency, they halted at the foot of this mountain, where they passed the night, having received a cow for supper, a present from the convent. Here Matthew (the ambassador) separated his baggage from that of the caravan, and left it to the care of the monks. He had probably made some little money in Portugal; and, distrusting his reception with the king, wisely determined to place it out of

danger. The precaution, however, proved superfluous; for, a few days after, an epidemical fever began to manifest itself, which, in eight-and-forty hours, carried off Matthew, and soon after Pereira, the servant of Don Roderigo; so that no opportunity now offered for an explanation with the king about his or the empress's promise of ceding one-third of the kingdom to the Portuguese, in case the king should send them succour. Terrified by the fever, and the bad prospect of the weather, they resumed their journey.

The monastery of Bisan (to which they were now going) is so called from the great quantity of water which is everywhere found about it. The similitude of sound has made Poncet *, and several other travellers, call it the Monastery of the Vision; but Bisan (water) is its true name, being plentifully supplied with that most valuable element. A number of lakes and rivers are interspersed through its plains; while abundant springs, that are never dry, flow from the top of each rock, dashing their rills against the rugged projections of the cliffs below.

The monastery of Bisan, properly so called, is the chief of six others in the compass of 26 miles; each convent being placed like a tower on the top of its own rock. That upon which Bisan is situated is very high, and almost perpendicular; and from this rises another still higher than it, which, unless to its inhabitants, is perfectly inaccessible. It is, on every side, surrounded with wood, interspersed with fruit-trees of many different kinds, as well of those known as of those unknown in Europe. Oranges, citrons, and

* Vide Poncet's Travels, in his return through Tigré, p. 116. London edit. 12mo. 1709.

limes are in great abundance; wild peaches and small figs of a very indifferent quality; black grapes, on loaded branches, hang down from the barren timber round which they are twined, and afford plentiful supply to man and beast: The fields are covered with myrtles and many species of jessamin; with roses too of various colours; but fragrance is denied to them all, except one sort, which is the white one, single-leafed *.

The monks of these convents were said once to be about a thousand in number. They have a large territory, and pay a tribute in cows and horses to the Baharnagash, who is their superior. Their horses are esteemed good, as coming from the neighbourhood of the Arabs. However, though I had the absolute choice of them all during the time I commanded the king's guards, I never could draw from that part of the country above a score of sufficient strength and size to bear a man in complete armour.

I shall now leave Don Roderigo to pursue his journey towards the king at Shoa. The history of it, and of his embassy, published at large by his chaplain Alvarez, has not met, from the historians of his own country, with a reception which favours the authenticity of its narrative. There are, indeed, in the whole of it, and especially where religion is concerned, many things very difficult of belief, which seem to be the work of the Jesuits, some years posterior to the time in which Alvarez was in Abyssinia. Tellez condemns him, though a writer of those times; and Damian Goez, one of the first historians, says, that he had seen a journal written in Alvarez's own name, very different from the journal that is gone forth to the

* In Barbary called Mishta, in Abyssinia, Kagga.

public. For my part, I can only say, that what is related of the first audience with the king, and many of the following pages, seem to me to be fabrications of people that never have been in Abyssinia; and, if this is the case, no imputation can be laid against Francisco Alvarez, as, perhaps, he is not the author of the misrepresentation in question. But, as to the cordiality with which the Catholic religion was received by the monks and people in general, during the long stay and bad reception Don Roderigo met with, I have no sort of doubt that this is a falsehood, and must be charged directly to his account.

We have already seen, that, early as Zara Jacob's time, the religion of the Franks was held in the utmost detestation, and that in Bæda Mariam's reign the whole country was in rebellion, because the king had directed the Virgin Mary to be painted by one Branca Leon, a Venetian painter, then alive, and in court, when Don Roderigo de Lima was with the king in Shoa. Iscander and Naod were both strict in the tenets of the church of Alexandria; and two Abunas, Imaranha Christos, who lived till Iscander's time, and Abuna Marcus, alive in Alvarez's, had given no allowance for strange or foreign worship to be introduced. How the Catholic religion could be so favourably and generally received in the time of Alvarez is what I cannot conceive. Blood enough was spilt immediately afterwards, to shew that this affection to the Roman Catholic religion, if any such there was in Alvarez's time, must have been merely transitory. When, therefore, I find any thing in this journal plainly misunderstood, I explain and vindicate it; where I see there is a fact deliberately misrepresented, such as the celebration of the Epiphany, I refute it from ocular demonstration. The rest of the journal I leave in medio to the judgment of my reader,

who will find it at his bookseller's; only observing, that there can be no doubt that the journey itself was made by Don Roderigo, and the persons named with him.

I have preserved the several stations of these travellers in my map, though a great part of the countries through which they passed is now in the hands of the Galla, and is as inaccessible to Abyssinians as it is to strangers.

There are two particulars in Alvarez's account of this journey, which very much surprise me. The first is, the daily and constant danger this company was in from tigers, so daring as to present themselves within pike-length. Of this I have taken notice in the appendix, when speaking of the hyæna.

The other particular relates to the field of beans through which they passed. I never yet saw this sort of grain or pulse, in Abyssinia. The lupine, a wild plant, somewhat similar, chiefly infests those provinces from which the honey comes, and is regarded there with the utmost aversion; the reason of which will be seen in the sequel. But as these Mahometans, through whose country Don Roderigo passed, are not indigenous, and never had any connection with the ancient state of manners or religion of this country, it is more than probable the cultivation of the bean is no older than the settlement of these Mahometans, long after the Pythagorean prejudices against that plant were forgotten.

It was on the 16th of April, 1520, that Don Roderigo de Lima landed in Abyssinia; and it was the 16th of October of the same year when he arrived within sight of the king's camp, distant about three miles. The king had advanced, as has been said, into Fatigar, about twenty-five miles from the first fair in the kingdom of Adel, and something less than two hundred from the port of Zeyla. The ambassa-

dor, after so painful a journey, expected an immediate admission into the king's presence. Instead of which, a great officer, called the Hadug Ras *, which signifies chief or commander of the asses, was sent to carry him three miles farther distant, where they ordered him to pitch his tent, and five years passed in the embassy afterwards before he procured his dismission.

Alvarez accounts very lamely for this prodigious interval of time; and, excepting the celebration of the Epiphany, he does not mention one remarkable occurrence in the whole of this period. One would imagine their stay had not been above a month, and that one conversation only passed upon business, which I shall here set down as a specimen of the humour the parties were in with one another.

The king carried the ambassador to see the church of Mecana Selassé, the church of the Trinity, which was then repairing, where many of the kings had been buried, while the royal family resided in Shoa. All the churches in Abyssinia are thatched. Some of Roderigo's own retinue, who bore him ill-will, had put it into the king's head, how elegant this church would be if covered with lead; a thing he certainly could have no idea of. He asked Don Roderigo, whether the king of Portugal could not send him as much sheet-lead as would cover that church? To which the ambassador replied, That the king of Portugal, upon bare mentioning the thing, would send him as much sheet-lead † as would cover not only that church, but all the other churches he should ever

* This is a name of humility. He is a great officer, and has no care or charge of asses.

† Alvarez Histoire d'Ethiopie, p. 157. As to the name Hadug, this word indeed signifies an ass, but it has many other senses, and I do not think that the name Hadug Ras rose from any allusion to that signification.—E.

build in Abyssinia; and, after all, that the present would be but a trifling one.

Immediately upon this the king changed his discourse; and observed to the ambassador, in a very serious tone of voice, "That, since they were now upon the subject of presents, he could not help letting the king of Portugal know, that if ever he sent an ambassador again into that country, he should take care to accompany him with presents of value; for otherwise stranger ambassadors, that ventured to come before him without these, were very ill received." To which the ambassador returned warmly, "That it was very far from being the custom of the king of Portugal to send presents to any king upon earth; that, having no superior, it was usual for him only to receive them from others, and to accept them or not, according to his royal pleasure; for it was infinitely below him to consider what was the value of the present itself. He then desired the king of Abyssinia might be informed, that he, Don Roderigo, came ambassador from the general of the Indies, and not from the king of Portugal; nevertheless, when the king of Portugal had lately dispatched Galvan, who had died upon the road, ambassador to his highness, he had sent with him presents to the value of 100,000 ducats, consulting his own greatness, but not considering himself as under any obligation to send any presents at all; and as to the many scandalous aspersions that had been thrown upon him by mean people, which the king had given credit to, and were constantly made part of his discourse, he wished his highness, from the perusal of the letters which he had brought from the general of the Indies, to learn, that the Portuguese were not accustomed to use lying and dissimulation in their conversations, but to tell the naked truth; to which he, the ambassador, had

strictly confined himself in every circumstance he had related to his highness, if he pleased to believe him; if not, that he was very welcome to do just whatever he thought better in his own eyes. Yet he would, once for all, have his highness to know, that, though he came only as ambassador from the general of the Indies, he could, as such, have presented himself before the greatest sovereign upon earth, without being subjected to hear such conversation as he had been daily exposed to from his highness, which he, as a Portuguese nobleman and a soldier, though he had been no ambassador at all, was not any way disposed to suffer, and therefore he desired his immediate dismission."

Upon this the king said, "That the distinction he had shewn him, was such as he would never have met with from any of his predecessors, having brought no present of any value." To which the ambassador replied, in great warmth, "That he had received no distinction in this country whatever, but only injuries and wrongs; that he should think he became a martyr if he died in this country, where he had been robbed of every thing, except the clothes upon his back; that Matthew, who was but a pretended ambassador, had been treated very differently by the king of Portugal; but for himself, he desired nothing but a speedy dismission, having delivered his letters, and done his errand: Till that time, he should expect to be treated like a man of honour, above lying or falsehood." To this the king answered, "That he believed him to be a man of honour, worth, and veracity; but that Matthew was a liar: At the same time he wished Don Roderigo to know, that he was perfectly informed what degree of respect and good usage Matthew had met with from the king of Portugal's officers and captains; but that he did not impute this to Don Roderigo."

A rumour prevailed at court, which very much alarmed the ambassador; it was, that the king intended to detain him, according to the invariable custom and practice of his country. Two Venetians, Nicholas Branca Leon and Thomas Gradinego, had been forcibly detained since the reign of Bæda Mariam. What terrified Don Roderigo still more, as a case most similar to his own, was the sight of Peter Covillan, then in court, who had been sent ambassador by John, king of Portugal, to Iscander, and had ever since been detained, without being able to get leave to return, but was obliged to marry, and settle in the country.

What was the emperor's real intention it is impossible now to know; but, having resolved to send an Abyssinian ambassador to the king of Portugal, it was necessary to dismiss Don Roderigo likewise. However, he did not entirely abandon the whole of his design, but forcibly detained Master John, the secretary, and Lazarus D'Andrad, the painter, and obliged Don Roderigo to depart without them. Zaga Zaab, an Abyssinian monk, who had learned the Portuguese language, by waiting on Don Roderigo during his stay in Abyssinia, was chosen for the function; and they set out together for Masuah, plentifully furnished with every thing necessary for the journey, and arrived safely there without any remarkable occurrence, where they found Don Hector de Silveyra, governor of the Indies, with his fleet, waiting to carry Don Roderigo home. Whether the king had changed his mind or not, is doubtful; but, on the 27th of April 1526, arrived four messengers from court, with orders for Don Roderigo to return, and also to bring Don Hector along with him. This was immediately and directly refused; but it was left in the power of Zaga Zaab to return if he pleased, who,

however, declared, that, if he staid behind, he should be thrown to the lions. He, therefore, returned with great readiness, and they all sailed from Masuah on the 28th of April, of the year just mentioned, in their return to India.

This frequent intercourse with the Portuguese had greatly alarmed the Mahometan powers; though neither the king of Abyssinia, nor the Portuguese themselves, had reaped any profit from it, or the several fleets that had arrived at Masuah, which had really no end but to seek the ambassador Don Roderigo. Six years spent in wrangling and childish behaviour, both on the part of the king and the ambassador, had an appearance of something serious between the two powers; and what still alarmed the Moors more was, that no part of the secret had transpired, because no scheme had really been concerted, only mere proposals of vain and idle enterprises, without either power or will to put them in execution. Such were the plans of a joint army, to attack Arabia, and to conquer it down to Jerusalem. The Turks * were on their progress southward in great force; they had conquered Arabia in less than half the time Don Roderigo had spent quarrelling with the king about pepper and mules; and a storm was ready to break in a quarter least expected.

In the gentle reigns of the Mamelukes, before the conquest of Egypt and Arabia by Selim †, a caravan constantly set out from Abyssinia directly for Jerusalem. They had then a treaty with the Arabs. This caravan rendezvoused at Hamazen, a small territory abounding in provisions, about two days journey from

* Canso el Gauri, and Tomum Bey.
† Selim I. emperor of the Ottomans.

Dobarwa, and nearly the same from Masuah: it amounted sometimes in number to a thousand pilgrims, ecclesiastics as well as laymen. They travelled by very easy journeys, not above six miles a-day, halting to perform divine service, setting up their tents early, and never beginning to travel till towards nine in the morning. They had, hitherto, passed in perfect safety, with drums beating and colours flying, and, in this way, traversed the desert by the road of Suakem.

The year after Selim had taken possession of Cairo, Abba Azerata Christos, a monk famous for his holiness, had conducted fifteen hundred of these pilgrims to Jerusalem, and arrived without accident; but, on their return, they had fallen in with a body of Selim's troops, who slew a great part of them, and forced others to take refuge in the desert, where they perished with hunger and thirst. In the year 1525, another caravan assembled at Hamazen, consisting of 336 friars and priests, and 15 nuns. They set out from Hamazen; on the 12th day after leaving this place, travelling slowly, and being loaded with provisions and water, they were attacked by the Moors of that district, and utterly defeated and robbed. Of the pilgrims taken prisoners, all the old men were put to the sword, and the young sold for slaves; so that, of 336 persons, but fifteen escaped, only three of whom lived to return to Shoa, at the time the ambassador was there. This was the first vengeance the Moors to the northward had taken for the alliance made with the Portuguese; and, from this time, the communication with Cairo through the desert ceased among the Christians, and was carried on by Mahometans only.

Since the time of Covillan's arrival in Abyssinia, the views of all parties had very much changed. The

Portuguese at first coveted the friendship of Abyssinia, for the sake of obtaining through it a communication with India. But they now became indifferent about that intercourse, since they had settled in India itself, and found the convenience of the passage of the Cape of Good Hope. David, freed from his fears of the Moors of Adel, whom he had defeated, and seeing the great power of the Turks, so much apprehended after the conquest of Egypt, disappointed in India in all their attempts against the Portuguese settlements there; being, moreover, displeased with the abrupt behaviour of the ambassador Don Roderigo, and the promises the empress Helena had made by Matthew, without his knowledge, he wished no further connection with the Portuguese, for whose assistance, he thought, he should have no use.

Selim, whose first object was the conquest of India, had met there so rude a reception, that he began to despair of further success in his undertaking; but, having conquered Arabia on one side of the Red Sea, he was desirous of extending his dominions to the other also, and for three reasons: The first was, that the safety of the holy place of Mecca would be much endangered, should a Portuguese army and fleet rendezvous in Abyssinia, and be joined by an army there. The second, that his ships and gallies could not be in security at the bottom of the Gulf, should the Portuguese obtain leave to fortify an island or harbour belonging to the Abyssinians. The third, that the king of Abyssinia being, as he was taught to believe, the prince whom the prophet Mahomet had honoured with his correspondence, he thought it a duty incumbent upon him to convert this prince and kingdom to the Mahometan religion by the sword; a method allowable in no religion but that of Mahomet and of Rome.

The ancient and feeble arms of lances and bows carried by half-naked peasants, assembled in haste and at random, for an occasion, were now laid aside. In place of these, Selim had left garrisons of veteran troops in all the sea-coast towns of Arabia, exercised in fire-arms, and furnished with large trains of artillery, supported by a large fleet, which, though destined against the Portuguese in India, and constantly beat by them, never failed, both going and coming, to reinforce their posts in Arabia with stores and fresh soldiers.

The empress Helena died in 1525, the year before the Portuguese embassy ended, after having brought about an interview between the two nations, which, by the continual disavowal of Matthew's embassy, it is plain that David knew not how to turn to advantage. Soon after her death, the king prepared to renew the war with the Moors, without having received the least benefit from the Portuguese. But very differently had the people of Adel employed this interval of peace. They had strengthened themselves, by the strictest friendship, with the Turkish officers in Arabia, especially with the basha of Zibid, a large trading port nearly opposite to Masuah. A Turkish garrison was put into Zeyla; and a Turk, with a large train of artillery, commanded in it. All was ready against the first invasion the king was to make, and he was now marching directly towards their country.

The first retaliation for the Portuguese friendship (as we have already observed) had been the cutting off the caravan for Jerusalem. In revenge for this, the king had marched into Dawaro, and sent a body of troops from that province, to see what was the state of the Moorish forces in Adel. These were no sooner arrived on the frontiers of that kingdom, than

they were met by a number of the enemy, appointed to guard those confines; and, coming to blows, the Abyssinians defeated, and drove them into the desert parts of their own country. The king still advanced, till he met the Mahometan army, and a battle was fought at Shimbra Coré, where the Abyssinian army was totally defeated; the Betwudet, Hadug Ras, the governor of Amhara, Robel, governor of the mountain of Geshen, with the greatest part of the nobility, and four thousand men, were all slain.

Mahomet, called Gragné (which signifies "left-handed"), commanded this army. He was governor of Zeyla, and had promoted the league with the Turkish bashas on the coast of Arabia; and, having now given the king a check in his first enterprise, he resolved to carry on the war with him in a way that should produce something decisive. He remained quiet two years at home; sent all the prisoners he had made in the last expedition, to Mecca, and to the Turkish powers on the coast; and required from them, in return, the number of troops stipulated, with a train of portable artillery, which was punctually furnished, while a large body of janizaries crossed over, and joined the Moorish army. Mahomet led these troops straight into Fatigar, which he overran, as he did the two other neighbouring provinces, Ifat and Dawaro, burning and laying waste the whole country, and driving, as was his usual manner, immense numbers of the inhabitants, whom the sword had spared, back with him to Adel.

The next year, Mahomet marched from Adel directly into Dawaro, committing the same excesses. The king, who saw, in despair, that total ruin threatened his whole country, and that there were no hopes but in a battle, met the Moorish army at Ifras, very much inferior to them in every sort of appointment.

The battle was fought 1st May 1528; the king was defeated, and Islam Segued, the first minister, who commanded the army that day, with many of his principal officers, were slain upon the spot, and the Moorish army took possession of Shoa. David retreated with his broken troops into Amhara, and encamped at Hegu, thinking to procure reinforcements during the bad weather; but Gragné was too near to give him time for these. He entered Amhara, destroying all before him. The 2d of November he burnt the churches of Mecana Selassé, of the holy sepulchre, and Atronsa Mariam; and, on the 8th of the same month, Ganèta Georgis; on the 2d of December, Debra Agezia-beher; the 6th of the same month, St Stephen's church; after which he returned to Adel with his booty.

The following year Gragné returned in April, plundered and burnt Warwar in Begemder, and wintered there. In the year 1530, Gragné invaded the province of Tigré in the month of October; while the king, who had wintered in Dembea, marched up to Woggora; whence, in December, he went to Tsalamet, and returned to Tigré, to keep the feast of the Epiphany.

The king, next year, marched through Tzegadé; and Gragné followed him closely, as if he had been hunting a wild beast rather than making war. The 2d of January he burnt Abba Samuel; then went down into Mazaga, on the border of Sennaar, to a conference with Muchtar, one of his confederates; where it was resolved, that they should fight the king whereever they could meet him, and attach themselves to his person alone. Gragné, by forced marches, overtook the king upon the Nile at Delakus, the 6th of February, and offered him battle; knowing the proud spirit of David, that he would not refuse, however great the disproportion of force.

The event was such as might have been expected. Fortune again declared against the king. Negadé Yasous, the Acab Saat, and many of the nobility perished, fighting to the last, in the sight of their sovereign. In this battle the brave monk, Andreas *, much advanced in years, was slain, behaving with the greatest gallantry, unwilling to survive the ruin of his country.

The Moors now found it unnecessary to keep together an army. They divided into small parties, that they might more effectually and speedily ruin the country. Part of Gragné's army was detached to burn Axum; the other, under Simeon, continued in Amhara to watch the king's motions; and, while he attempted to relieve Axum, dispersed his army; on which the town was burnt, and with it many of the richest churches in Abyssinia, Hallelujah, Banquol, Gaso, Debra Kerbé, and many others. And, on the 7th of April, Saul, son of Tesfo Yasous, fought another detachment of the Moorish army, and was cut to pieces.

The 28th year of his reign, 1536, the king crossed the Tacazzé, and had many disastrous encounters with the people of Siré and Serawé. Tesfo l'Oul, who commanded in this latter province for the king, surprised a Turkish party under Adli, whom he slew, and met with the same fate himself from Abbas, the Moorish governor of Serawé, when a great many of the principal people of that province were there slain. Galila, a large island in the lake Tzana, was plundered, and the convent upon it burnt. It was one of the

* It was he, who, as we have seen, slew the Moor Maffudi in single combat, in the beginning of this reign.

principal places where the Abyssinians hid their treasure, and a great booty was found there.

In the following year, Gragné, in a message, represented to David, that he might see he was fighting against God, exhorting him to be wise, and make his peace in time; which he should have, upon the condition of giving him his daughter in marriage, and he would then withdraw his army; otherwise he would never leave Abyssinia, till he had reduced it to a condition of producing nothing but grass. The king, nothing daunted, returned him for answer, That he was an infidel, and a blasphemer, used as an instrument to chastise him, and his people, for their many sins; that it was his duty to bear the correction patiently; but that it would soon happen, when this just purpose was answered, that he should be destroyed, and all those with him, as such wicked instruments had always been; that he the king, and Abyssinia his kingdom, would be preserved as a monument of the mercy of God, who never entirely forsook his people, though he might chastise him.

Indeed, the condition of the country was now such, that total destruction seemed to be at hand; for a famine, and plague, its constant companion, raged in Abyssinia, carrying off those that the sword had spared.

Gideon and Judith, king and queen of the Jews, in the high country of Samen, after having suffered much from Gragné, had at last rebelled and joined him; and the king, who, it seems, continued to shew an inclination to the Catholic church, which he had imbibed during the embassy of Don Roderigo, by this had occasioned many to fall off from him; he and the court observing Easter according to the Roman calendar, while the rest of the clergy and kingdom continued firm to that of Alexandria.

At this time, Osman of Dawaro, Jonadab, Kefla, Yousef, and other rebel Abyssinians, part of Ammer's army, one of Gragné's generals, surprised the king's eldest son, Victor, going to join his father, the 7th day of March, slew him, and dispersed his army. Three days after, the king himself came to action with Ammer at Zaat in Waag; but he was there again beaten, and his youngest son Menas was taken prisoner. The king had scarce now an attendant, and, being almost alone, he took refuge among the rocks and bushes in a high mountain called Tsalem, in the district of Tsalamet. But he had not remained above a day there, when he was followed by Joram (rebel master of that district), and narrowly escaped being taken, as he was crossing the Tacazzé on foot, and alone; whence he took refuge on Mount Tabor, a very high mountain in Siré, and there passed the winter.

The amazing spirit and constancy of David, who alone seemed not to forsake the cause of his kingdom, who now, without children or army, still singly made war for the liberty of his county, astonished all Abyssinia, as well friends as enemies. Every veteran soldier, therefore, that could escape the small parties of the Moors which surrounded the king, joined him at Tabor; and he was again at the head of a very small, but brave body of troops, though it was scarcely known in what part of the kingdom he was hid. When Achmet-eddin, lieutenant of Ammer, passed through Siré, loaded with the spoils of the churches and towns he had plundered, the king, finding him within his reach, descended from the mountain, and, by a sudden march, surprised and slew him with his own hand, leaving the greatest part of his army dead on the field. After which, he distributed the booty among his small army.

Ammer, the king's mortal enemy, who had taken upon himself the destruction of the royal family, descended into the province of Siré, and neighbourhood of Tabor, and there indulged himself in the most wanton cruelties, torturing and murdering the priests, burning churches and villages, expecting from this the king would lose his temper, and leave his strong-hold in the mountain. But hearing, at the same time, that a large quantity of plate, and other treasure, belonging to the church Debra Kerbé, had been carried into an island in the lake Tzana for safety, he left the king, and seized his booty in the lake, to a very great amount.

There, however, he fell ill of a fever; but, at his return, was so far advanced in his recovery, as to resume his schemes of destroying the king; when, the night of the 10th of February 1538, while he was sleeping in bed in his tent, a common soldier, from what quarrel or cause is not known, went secretly and stabbed him several times in the belly with a two-edged knife, so that he died instantly, to David's great relief, and much to the safety of the whole kingdom.

It was now twelve years since Don Roderigo de Lima had sailed from Masuah, carrying with him Zaga Zaab, ambassador from the king of Abyssinia. This embassy arrived safe in Lisbon, and was received with great magnificence by King John; but, as the circumstances of the kingdom, when he left Masuah, were really flourishing, and as the treatment he met in Portugal was better than he had, probably, ever experienced at home, he seems to have been in no haste to put an end to this embassy. On the other side, the king of Portugal's affairs in India were arrived at that degree of prosperity and power, that little use remained for such an ally as the king of Abyssinia.

The Moorish trade and navigation to India had al-

eady received a fatal blow, as well from the Portuguese themselves, as from the fall of the Mamalukes in Egypt; and Soliman, and his servant Sinan Basha, by their conquest, and introducing soldiers, who had not any idea of, or talent for trade, but only plunder and rapine, had given a finishing stroke to what the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope began. The filling of Arabia with fire-arms and Turks was now of consequence to none but David; and of such a consequence it had been, that, as we have seen, in the course of twelve years it had left him nothing in Abyssinia but the bare name of king, and a life so precarious, that it could not be counted upon from one day's end to the other.

David had detained in Abyssinia two Portuguese; one called Mr John, the other Lazarus d'Andrad, a painter, being two of Don Roderigo's train that came from the Indies with him. The Abuna (Mark) was become old and incapable, and, since the Turkish conquest of Egypt, very indifferent to, and unconnected with, what passed at Cairo. Before he died, at the king's desire, he had appointed John his successor; and accordingly ordained him Abuna, having first given him all the inferior orders at once; for John was a layman and a student in physic; a very simple creature, but a great bigot: and we shall henceforth call him John Bermudes.

John very willingly consented to his ordination, provided the pope approved of it; and he set out for Rome, not by the usual way of India, but through Arabia and Egypt; and, arriving there without accident, was confirmed by Paul III., then pope, not only as patriarch of Abyssinia, but likewise of Alexandria; to which he joined the very unintelligible and incomprehensible title, of Patriarch of the Sea. Bermudes, to this variety of charges, had

another added to him, that of ambassador from King David to the court of Portugal; and for this he was certainly very fit, however he might be for his ecclesiastical dignities; for he had been now twelve years in Abyssinia, knew the kingdom well, and had been witness of the variety of distresses which, following close one upon another, had brought this country to its then state of ruin.

While these things passed in the north of Abyssinia, a terrible catastrophe happened in the south. A Mahometan chief, called Vizir Mudgid, governor of Arar, having an opportunity, from his situation, to hear of the riches which were daily carried from churches, and other places, for safety, into the mountain of Geshen, formed a resolution to attempt that natural fortress, though in itself almost impregnable, and strengthened by an army constantly encamped at the foot of it.

When Mudgid arrived near the mountain, he found it forsaken by the troops destined to guard it; and led by a Mahometan, a menial servant of the princes above, he and his troops ascended without opposition, and put all the royal family that were prisoners, and indeed every individual of either sex resident there, indiscriminately to the sword.

The measure of David's misfortunes seems to have been now full; and he died accordingly this very year, 1540.

It will be necessary here to remind the reader, that Alvarez, the chaplain and historian of the first Portuguese embassy, was (as he said), on his return, appointed by King David to make his submission to the pope. Leaving Zaga Zaab, therefore, in Portugal, he proceeded to Bologna, where the emperor Charles V. was then in person; before whom, and the pope himself, he delivered his credentials, framed by Peter Co-

villan, and afterwards, in a long speech, the reasons of his embassy.

The pope received this submission of David with infinite pleasure, at a time when so many kingdoms in the west were revolting from his supremacy. He considered it as a thing of the greatest moment to be courted before the emperor by so powerful a prince in Africa. As for the emperor himself, though he was then preparing for an expedition against the Mahometans, and though it was his favourite war, he seems to have been perfectly indifferent either to the embassy itself, or to the person that sent it: a great proof that he believed there was nothing real in it.

Many people besides have doubted whether this embassy, or that of John Bermudes, actually came from the Abyssinian court; as the king would scarcely have abandoned the form of the Alexandrian church, in which he had been brought up by Abuna Mark, then alive. Abuna Mark, moreover, could scarcely be believed to have promoted embassies, which were intended to strike at the root of his own religion, and the patriarchal power with which he was endowed.

But to this it is easily answered, That the Abyssinian historian of David's reign, through the whole course of it, readily admits his constant attachment to the see of Rome. He gives a striking instance of it during the war with Gragné, when the king celebrated Easter after the manner of the Roman Catholics; though it had this certain effect of dividing his kingdom, and alienating the minds of his subjects, of whose assistance he was then in the utmost need. As for the Abuna, we are to consider that Cairo had been taken, Egypt subdued, and the government, which Abuna Mark owned for the lawful one, had been overturned by the Turks, who then possessed

it, and were actually persecuting the Alexandrian church.

The Abuna then, and the king also, had the same reason for not applying to Cairo, the seat of the Turks their enemies; and, therefore, more readily accommodated matters with a people, from whom only their assistance could come; and without whom, it was probable that both the Christian religion and civil government of Abyssinia would fall together.

It has been said of this king, by the European writers who have touched upon the history of his reign, that he was a prince who had begun it in the most promising manner; but who, after the death of the empress Helena, had abandoned himself to all sort of debauchery, especially that of women; insomuch, as Mr Ludolf says, to suffer his concubines to have idols in his palace. This I take to be a calumny, copied from the Portuguese priests, who never forgave him the denial of his writing the letters by Matthew, in which it was said he gave the Portuguese, or rather the king of Portugal, one-third of the kingdom: for he succeeded to the crown at eleven years of age; defeated and slew Maffudi when he was about sixteen; and, when Don Roderigo and the Portuguese embassy were with him, he was then something more than twenty, a very devout prudent prince, according to the account Alvarez, an eye-witness, gives of him; and all this time Empress Helena was alive.

Again, the very year after the Portuguese embassy left Abyssinia, that is, in the year 1526, the king was defeated by the Moors; and from that time to his death, was hunted about the country like a wild-beast, from rock to rock, very often alone, and, at all times, slenderly attended, till he died, in 1540, at the age of 46; so that there is no period, during his life, in which this calumny can be justly fixed upon him.

As for the idolatry he is accused of suffering in his palace among his Pagan mistresses, I cannot recollect any place in the adjoining nations from which he could have brought these idolatrous rites or mistresses. The Pagan countries around him profess a remnant of ill-understood Sabaism, worshipping the stars, the moon, and the wind; but I do not, as I say, recollect any of these bordering on Abyssinia who worship idols*.

* The misfortunes of David's reign arose from the inferiority of his subjects to their enemies in the art of war, their intestine discord, and the rash conduct of that ill-fated prince. He was brave and intelligent; but his information, relative to the state of foreign politics, was too limited to prevent, in due time, his approaching calamities, or to enable him to cope with his dangerous Christian allies. The broken annals of his unfortunate government are a meagre catalogue of perpetual distresses, interspersed with deep lamentations, in the manner of the Jewish prophets. There are three copies of them in Mr Bruce's MSS., one in the Chronicle of Abyssinia, another in the Annals, Vol. II., and a third in the book of Axum.—E.

CLAUDIUS, OR ATZENAF SEGUED.

From 1540 to 1559.

Prosperous beginning of Claudius's Reign—Christopher de Gama lands in Abyssinia—Prevented by the rainy Season from joining the King—Battle of Ainal—Battle of Offalo—Christopher de Gama slain—Battle of Isaac's Bet—Moors defeated, and their General slain—Abyssinian army defeated—Claudius slain—Remarkable behaviour of Nur, Governor of Zeyla, General of the Moors.

CLAUDIUS succeeded his father David III. being yet young, and found the empire in circumstances that would have required an old and experienced prince. But, young as he was, he possessed those graceful and affable manners which, at first sight, attached people of all sorts to him. He had been tutored with great care by the empress Helena, was expert in all warlike exercises, and brave beyond his years.—So say the Abyssinian annals; and though I have not thought myself warranted to depart from the letter of the context, yet it is my duty to the reader to shew him how this could not be.

Claudius was born about the year 1522; the empress Helena died in 1525. From this it is plain, the

first three years of his life was all that he could be under the tutelage of the empress Helena; and, at so early a period, it is not possible he could receive much advantage. The princess, to whom he was indebted for his education, was Sabel Wenghel, celebrated in Abyssinian history for wisdom and courage equal to the empress Helena herself. She was the relict of David. We shall hereafter see her called Helena likewise upon another occasion; but the reader is requested to have in mind, that this confusion of persons is owing only to that of names, to be met with almost in every reign in the Abyssinian history.

Claudius is said likewise, in these annals, to have been a child at the time of his accession; but, having been born in the year 1522, and succeeding to the throne in 1540, he must have been 18 years of age; and this cannot be called childhood, especially in Abyssinia, unless, as I have before said, this observation of age was relative to the arduous task he had in hand, by succeeding to a kingdom arrived at the very eve of perdition.

The Moors, notwithstanding the constant success they had against David, still feared the consequences of his long experience, and undaunted resolution, in the most adverse fortune. They were happy, therefore, in the change of such an enemy, however unfortunate, for a young man, scarcely yet out of the influence of female government, which had always been favourable to them, and their religion.

A general league was formed, without delay, among all the Mahometan chiefs, to surround Claudius, and fall upon him before he was in a situation to defend himself, and by one stroke put an end to the war. They accordingly began to collect troops from all quarters; but with a degree of inattention and presumption, that sufficiently shewed they thought them-

selves in no danger. But the young king having good intelligence that Vizir Asa, Osman, Debra Yasous, and Joram (who had so nearly taken his father prisoner in the mountain Tsalem), had their quarters near him, and neglected a good look-out, fell upon them, without their knowing what his force was, entirely defeated them, dispersed their army, and struck a panic into the whole confederacy, by the manner this victory was followed up. The king himself, on horseback, continued the pursuit all that day and night, as also the next day, and did not return to his camp till the second evening after his victory, having slain, without mercy, every one that had fallen into his hands, either in the flight, or in the field of battle.

The behaviour of Claudius, on this first occasion, raised the soldiers' confidence to a degree of enthusiasm. Every man, that had served under his father, repaired to him with the greatest alacrity. Above all, the Agows of Lasta came down to him in great troops from their rugged and inaccessible mountains; the chief of that warlike nation being related to him by his mother.

The king in person, at the head of his army, became now an object of such consideration, as to make the Mahometan chiefs no longer retire, as usual, to winter in Adel, but canton themselves in the several districts they had conquered in Abyssinia, and lay aside the thoughts of farther wasting the country, to defend themselves against so active and spirited an assailant. They agreed then to join their whole forces together, and march to force the king to a battle. Osman of Ganzé, Vizir Mudgid, who had settled in Amhara, Sabereddin *, and all the inferior rebel of-

* Constant in the faith.

ficers of Siré and Serawé, effected a junction about the same time without opposition. Jonathan alone, a rebel of great experience, had not yet appeared with his troops. The king, on the other hand, did not seem over anxious to come to an engagement, though his army was every day ready for battle; and his ground was always taken with advantage, so that it was almost desperate to pretend to force him.

Jonathan, at last, was on his way to join the confederates; but the king had as early intelligence of his motions as his friends: and, while he was yet two days march distant from the camp, the king, leaving his tents standing, and his fires lighted, by a forced march in the night came upon him (while he thought him blocked up by his rebel associates at a distance); and, finding Jonathan without preparation or defence, cut his whole army to pieces, slew him, and then returned to his own tents as rapidly as he went, having ordered small detachments to continue in the way between him and his camp, patrolling, lest some ambush should be laid for him by the enemy, who, if they had been informed of his march, though they were too late to prevent the success of it, might still have attempted to revenge it.

But intelligence was now given to the Moors with much less punctuality and alacrity than formerly. So generally did the king possess the affections of the country people, that no information came to the confederate army till the next day after his return, when, early in the morning, he dispatched one of the Moorish prisoners that he had taken three days before, and spared for the purpose, carrying with him the head of Jonathan, and a full account of the havock to which he had been a witness.

This messenger bore also the king's defiance to the Moors, whom he challenged, under the odious epithets they deserved, to meet him; and then actually,

to shew he was in earnest, marched towards them with his army, which he formed in order of battle. But though they stood under arms for a considerable time, whilst several invitations to single combat were sent from the Christian horsemen, as their custom is, before they engage, or when their camps are near each other; yet the Moors were so astonished at what had happened, and what they saw now before them, that not one officer would advise the risking a battle, nor any one soldier accept of the challenge offered. The king then returned to his camp, distributed the whole booty among his soldiers, and refreshed them; preserving a proper station to cover the wounded, whom he sent off to places of security.

The king was in the country of Samen, in the neighbourhood of Lasta. He then decamped, and passed the river Tacazzé, that he might be nearer those districts of which the Turks had possessed themselves. In this march all sorts of people joined the victorious army. Those that had revolted, and many that had apostatized, came without fear, and surrendered themselves, trusting to the clemency of the prince. Many of the Moors, natives of Abyssinia, did the same, after having experienced the difference between the mild Christian government, and that of their new masters, the Moors and Turks of Adel.

The king encamped at Sard, there to pass his Easter; and, as is usual in the great festivals, many of the nobility obtained leave to attend the religious offices of the season at home with their families. Ammer, governor of Ganzé, who knew the custom of the country, thought this was the time to surprise the king thinly attended; and it might have succeeded, if intelligence of the enemy's designs had not been received almost as soon as they were formed. Claudius, therefore, drawing together some of the best of

his forces, placed himself in ambush in Ammer's way, who, not suspecting, fell into it with his army, which was totally destroyed on the 24th of April, 1541. After which the king left his own quarters at Sard and came to Shume.

While things were taking this favourable turn in Abyssinia, the ambassador, John Bermudes, had passed from Rome to Lisbon, where he was acknowledged by the king as patriarch of Alexandria, Abyssinia, and, as he will have it, of the Sea. The first thing he did was to give the Portuguese a sample of Abyssinian discipline, by putting Zaga Zaab in irons, for having wasted so much time without affecting any of the purposes of his embassy: but, by the interposition of the king, he was set at liberty in a few days. Bermudes then fell roundly on the subject of his embassy; and drew such a picture of the distresses of Abyssinia, and insisted in his own blunt way so violently with the king of Portugal, and the nobility in general, that he procured an order from the king for Don Garcia de Noronha, who was then going out viceroy of the Indies, to send 400 Portuguese musqueteers from India to the relief of Abyssinia, and to land them at Masuah.

John Bermudes, to secure the assistance promised, resolved to embark in the same fleet with Don Garcia; but he fell sick, from poison given him, as he apprehends, by Zaga Zaab, and this delayed his embarkation a year. The next year, being recovered of his illness, he arrived safely in India. In the interim, Don Garcia died, and Don Stephen de Gama, who succeeded him, did not embrace the scheme of the intended succour with such eagerness as Bermudes could have wished.

After some delay, it was resolved that Don Stephen should himself undertake an expedition from

India, to burn the Turkish gallies that were at Suez. In this, however, Don Stephen was disappointed.—Upon intelligence of the intended visit, the Turkish gallies had all been drawn ashore. He came after this to the port of Masuah, where the fleet intended to water; and, for that purpose, their boats were sent to Arkeeko, a small town and fortress upon the main-land, where good water may be found. But the Moors and Turks from Zeyla and Adel were now masters there, who took the 1000 webs of cotton cloth the captain had sent to exchange for water and provisions, and sent him word back, that his master, the king of Adel, was now king of all Ethiopia, and would not suffer any further trade to be carried on, but through his subjects; if, therefore, the captain of the fleet would make peace with him, he should restore the cotton-webs which had been taken, supply him plentifully with provisions, and make amends for the sixty Portuguese slain on the coast near Zeyla: For, upon the fleet's entering the Red Sea, this number of Portuguese had run away with a boat; and, landing in the kingdom of Adel, where they could procure no water, they were decoyed to give up their arms, and were then all massacred.

The captain, Don Stephen, saw the trap laid for him by the Moors; and, resolving to pay them in their own coin, he returned this answer to their message, "That he was very willing to trade with the Moorish officer, but did not demand restitution of the cloths, as they were taken in fair war. As for the sixty Portuguese, they had met the death they deserved, as being traitors and deserters: That he now sent a thousand more webs of cloth, desiring water and provisions, especially live cattle; and that, as it was now the time of their festival, he would treat with them for

peace, and bring his goods ashore as soon as the holidays were over."

This being agreed to on both sides, with equal bad faith and intention towards each other, and Don Stephen having obtained his refreshments, he strictly forbade any further communication with the shore. He then selected a body of six hundred men, the command of whom he gave to Martin Correa, who, in light boats, without shewing any fire, landed undiscovered below Arkeeko, and took possession of the entrances to the town, putting all that they met to the sword. Nur, governor of the province for the king of Adel, fled as soon as he had heard the Portuguese were in the town. He was already in the fields, when Martin Correa shot him with a musquet, and cut off his head, which was sent before them to the queen, Sabel Wenghel, then in a strong-hold of the province of Tigré, and with her Degdeasmati (which, in common discourse, is called Kasmati) Robel. This was the person of that name who had met Don Roderigo in his journey to find the king, and who was now governor of the province. The queen received the head of the Moorish general with great demonstrations of joy, considering it as an early pledge of future victories.

In the mean time, Don Stephen De Gama, captain of the fleet, began to enroll the men destined to march to join Claudius. Four hundred and fifty musqueteers was the number granted by the king to Bermudes; but an ardent desire of glory had seized all the Portuguese, and every one strove to be in the nomination for that enterprise. All that Don Stephen could do was to choose men of the first rank for the officers; and these, of necessity, having many servants whom they carried with them, by this means greatly increased the number beyond 450. Don Christopher de

Gama, Don Stephen's youngest brother, a nobleman of great hopes, was chosen to command this small army of heroes.

A very great murmuring, nevertheless, prevailed among those that were refused, which was scarcely kept in due bounds by the presence and authority of the governor Don Stephen himself. And from this honourable emulation, and the discontent these brave soldiers who were left behind shewed, the bay where the galley rode in the harbour of Masuah, on board of which this council was held, is called, to this day, Bahia dos Agravados, the Bay of the Wronged, or Injured People, sometimes misinterpreted the Bay of the Sick.

The army under Don Christopher marched to Arkeeko, where the next day came the governor Don Stephen, and the principal officers of the fleet, and took leave of their countrymen; and, after receiving the blessing of Don John Bermudes, Patriarch of the Sea, the governor and rest of the Portuguese embarked, and returned to India.

Don Christopher, with the greatest intrepidity, began his march towards Dobarwa, the easiest entrance into Abyssinia, though still over rugged and almost inaccessible mountains. The Baharnagash had orders to attend him, and furnish this little army with cattle both for their provision and carriages; and this he actually performed. But the carriages of the small train of artillery giving way in this bad road, and there being nobody at hand to assist them with fresh ones in case the old failed, Gama made certain carriages of wood after the pattern of those they had brought from Portugal; and, as iron was a very scarce commodity in Abyssinia, he made them split in pieces some barrels of old and useless firelocks for the wheels with which they were to draw their artillery.

The queen, without delay, came forward to join Don Christopher; who, hearing she was at hand, went to meet her a league from the city, with drums beating and colours flying, and saluted her with a general discharge of fire-arms, which terrified her much. Her two sisters accompanied her, and a number of attendants of both sexes. Don Christopher, at the head of his soldiers, paid his compliments with equal gallantry and respect. The queen was covered from head to foot, but lifted up her veil, so that her face could be seen by him; and he, on the other hand, appointed a hundred musqueteers for her guard; and thus they returned to Dobarwa, mutually satisfied with this their first interview.

Don Christopher marched from Dobarwa eight days through a very rugged country, endeavouring, if possible, to bring about a junction with the king. And it was in this place, while he was encamped, that he received a message from the Moorish general, full of opprobrious expressions, which was answered in much the same manner. Don Christopher continued his march as much as he could on account of the rains; and Gragné, whose greatest desire was to prevent the junction, followed him into Tigré. Neither army desired to avoid the other, and they were both marching to the same point; so that, on the 25th of March 1542, they came in sight of each other at Ainal, a small village in the country of the Baharnagash.

The Moorish army consisted of 1000 horsemen, 5000 foot, 50 Turkish musqueteers, and a few pieces of artillery. Don Christopher, besides his 450 musqueteers, had about 12,000 Abyssinians, mostly foot, with a few bad horse, commanded by the Baharnagash, and Robel, governor of Tigré. Don Christopher, whose principal view was a junction with the king, though he did not decline fighting, yet, like a

good officer, he chose to do it, as much as possible, upon his own terms; and, therefore, as the enemy exceeded greatly in the number of horse, he posted himself so as to make the best of his fire-arms and artillery. And well it was that he did so, for the Abyssinians shewed the utmost terror when the firing began on both sides.

Gragné, mounted on a bay horse, advancing too near Don Christopher's line, that he might see if in any part it was accessible to his cavalry; and being known by his dress to be an officer of distinction, was shot at by Peter de Sa, a Portuguese marksman, who killed his horse, and wounded the rider in the leg. This occasioned a great confusion, and would probably have ended in a defeat of the Moors, had not the Portuguese general also been wounded immediately after by a shot. Don Christopher, to shew his confidence of victory, ordered his men forthwith to pitch their tents, upon which the Moors retired with Gragné (whom they had mounted on another horse), without being pursued, the Abyssinians having contented themselves with being spectators of the battle.

Don Christopher, with his army and the empress, now entered into winter quarters at Affalo; nor did Gragné depart to any distance from him, but took up his quarters at Zabul, always in hopes to fight the Portuguese before it was possible for them to effect a junction with the king. The winter passed in a mutual intercourse of correspondence and confidence between the king and Don Christopher, and in determining upon the best scheme to pursue the war with success. Don Christopher and the queen were both of opinion, that, considering the small number of Portuguese first landed, and their diminution by fighting, and a strange cli-

mate, it was risking every thing to defer a junction till the winter was over.

The Moorish general was perfectly of the same opinion; therefore, as soon as the king began his march from Dembea, Gragné advanced to Don Christopher's camp, and placed himself between the Portuguese army and that of the king, drawing up his troops before the camp, and defying the Portuguese to march out, and fight, in the most opprobrious language. Don Christopher, in a long catalogue of virtues, which he possessed to a very eminent degree, had not the smallest claim to that of patience, so very necessary to those that command armies. He was brave to a fault; rash and vehement; jealous of what he thought military honour; and obstinate in his resolutions, which he formed in consequence. The defiance of this barbarian, at which an old general would have laughed, made him utterly forget the reasons he himself frequently alleged, and the arguments used by the queen, which the king's approach daily strengthened, that it was risking every thing to come to a battle till the two armies had joined. He had, however, from no other motive but Gragné's insolence, formed his resolution to fight, without waiting a junction; and accordingly, the 30th of August, early in the morning, having chosen his ground to the best advantage, he offered battle to the Moorish army.

Gragné, by presents sent to the basha of Zibid, had doubled his number of horse, which now consisted of 2000. He had got likewise 100 Turkish musqueteers, an infinite number of foot, and a train of artillery more numerous and complete than ever had been seen before in Abyssinia. The queen, frightened at the preparation for the battle, fled, taking with her the Portuguese patriarch, who seemed

to have as little inclination as she had to see the issue of the day. But Don Christopher, who knew well the bad effects this example would have, both on Abyssinians and Portuguese, sent twenty horse, and brought them both back; telling the patriarch it was a breach of duty he would not suffer, for him to withdraw until he had confessed him, and given the army absolution before the action with the Infidels.

The battle was fought on the 30th of August with great fury and obstinacy on both sides. The Portuguese had strewed, early in the morning, all the front of their line with gun-powder, to which, on the approach of the Turks, they set fire by trains, which burnt and disabled a great many of them; and things bore a prosperous appearance, till the Moorish general ordered some artillery to be pointed against the Abyssinians, who, upon hearing the first explosion, and seeing the effect of some balls that had lighted among them, fled, and left the Portuguese to the number only of 400, who were immediately surrounded by the Moorish army. Nor did Gragné pursue the fugitives, his affair being with the Portuguese, the smallness of whose number promised they would fall an easy and certain sacrifice. He therefore attacked their camp upon every side with very little success, having lost most of his best officers, till, unfortunately, Don Christopher, fighting and exposing himself everywhere, was singled out by a Turkish soldier, and shot through the arm. Upon this all his men turned their thoughts from their own preservation to that of their general, who obstinately refused to fly, till he was by force put upon a litter, and sent off, together with the patriarch and queen.

Night now coming on, Don Christopher had got into a wood in which there was a cave. There he or-

dered himself to be set down to have his wounds dressed; which being done, he was urged by the queen and patriarch to continue his flight. But he had formed his resolution, and, without deigning to give his reasons, he obstinately refused to retreat a step farther. In vain the queen, and those that knew the country, told him he was just in the track of the Moorish horsemen, who would not fail soon to surround him. He repeated his resolution of staying there with such a degree of firmness, that the queen and patriarch, who had no great desire for martyrdom, left him to his fate, which presently overtook him.

In one of Don Christopher's expeditions to the mountains, he had taken a very beautiful woman, wife to a Turkish officer whom he had slain. This lady had made a shew of conversion to Christianity; lived with him afterwards, and was treated by him with the utmost tenderness. It was said, that, after he was wounded and began to fly, this woman had given him his route, and promised to overtake him with friends that would carry him to a place of safety. Accordingly, some servants left by the queen, hidden among the rocks, to watch what might befal him, and assist him if possible, saw a woman, in the dawn of the morning, come to the cave, and return into the wood immediately, whence there rushed out a body of Moorish horse, who went straight to the cave, and found Don Christopher lying upon the ground sorely wounded. Upon the first question that was asked him, he declared his name, which so overjoyed the Moors, that they gave over further pursuit, and returned with the prisoner they had taken. Don Christopher was brought into the presence of the Moorish general, Gragné, who loaded him with reproaches; to which he replied with such a share of invectives, that the Moor, in the violence of his passion, drew

his sword, and cut off his head with his own hand. His head was sent to Constantinople, and parts of his body to Zibid and other quarters of Arabia.

The Portuguese camp was now taken, and all the wounded in it were put to death. The women, from their fear, having retired all into Don Christopher's tent, the Turks began to indulge themselves in their usual excesses towards their captives, when a noble Abyssinian woman, who had been married to a Portuguese, seeing the shocking treatment that was awaiting them, set fire to several barrels of gun-powder that were in the tent, and at once destroyed herself, her companions, and those that were about to abuse them.

The queen and patriarch, after travelling through most difficult ways, and being hospitably entertained wherever they passed, at last took up their residence in the Jews' mountain, a place inaccessible in point of strength, having but one entrance, and that very difficult, being also defended by a multitude of inhabitants who dwell on a large plain on the top of that mountain, where there is plenty of space to plough and sow, and a large stream of water that runs through the whole of it. Here they staid two months, as well to repose themselves, as to give the king time to relieve them. After hearing that he was in motion, they left the mountain of the Jews, and met him on his march towards them.

Claudius shewed great signs of sorrow for the death of Don Christopher, and mourned three days. He then sent 3000 ounces of gold to be divided among the Portuguese, who, in the place of Don Christopher, had elected Alphonso Caldeyra for their captain. These all flocked about the king, demanding that he would lead them to battle, that they might revenge the death of Don Christopher.

Soon after which, Alphonso Caldeyra, exercising a horse in the field, was thrown off, and died of the fall. In his place was elected Arius Dias, a Portuguese, born at Coimbra, whose mother was a black; he was very much favoured by the king, who now began to cultivate particular parties among the Portuguese, in order to divide them, and weaken their attachment for their patriarch, religion, and country.

The king marched from Samen to Shawada, where the Moorish army came in full force to meet him. They were not, however, those formidable troops that had defeated and taken Don Christopher: For the Turkish soldiers, who were the strength of the army, expecting to have shared a great sum each for Don Christopher's ransom, thought themselves exceedingly injured by the manner in which he was put to death; and they had all accordingly returned into Arabia, leaving Gragné to fight his own battles for his own profit. Nor was Claudius ignorant of this; but having collected all his army, he gave the Moors battle on the 15th of November, in a plain called Woggora, on the top of Lamalmon, in which the Moors, notwithstanding their recent victory, were not long in yielding to the superiority of the king's troops.

The loss of the day was not inconsiderable. Mahomet, Osman, and Talil, three Moorish leaders, famous for their successes against David, the king's father, were this day slain in the field.

Claudius now descended into the low country of Dersegué, a very plentiful province, to which the Moors always retreated to strengthen themselves after any misfortune. This the king utterly destroyed; while Gragné did the same with those countries in Dembea that had been recovered by the Abyssinians.

Claudius then returned to Shawada, and Gragné to Dersegnè. After that the king marched to Wainadega; and Gragné, leaving Derseguè, advanced so near the king's army, that the outposts were nearly in sight of each other. In such a position of two such armies, a battle became inevitable.

Accordingly, on the 10th of February 1543, in the morning, the king, whose quarters were at Isaac's Bet, having well refreshed his army, marched out of his camp, and offered the enemy battle. The Portuguese, ever mindful of Don Christopher, fought with a bravery like to desperation; and the presence of the king keeping the Abyssinians in their duty, the van of Gragne's army was pushed back upon the centre, and much confusion was like to follow, till Gragne advanced alone before them, waving and beckoning with his hands to his men that they should follow; and he was already come so near the line of the Portuguese, as to be easily known and distinguished by them.

Peter Lyon, a man of low stature, but very active and valiant, who had been valet-de-chambre to Don Christopher, having crept unseen along the course of a river a considerable space nearer, to make his aim more certain, shot Gragné with his musket, so that the ball went through his body in the moment that both armies joined. Gragné, finding that his wound was mortal, rode aside from the pressure of the troops towards a small thicket, and was closely followed by Peter Lyon, who saw him fall dead from his horse. Desirous still to do further service in the battle, this soldier would not encumber himself with his head, but, cutting off one of the ears, he put it in his pocket, and returned to the action. The Moorish army no sooner missed the presence of their general, than confounding all ranks, they fell into confusion, and were

pursued by the Portuguese and Abyssinians with a great slaughter, till the evening.

The next morning, in surveying the dead, the body of Gragné was found by an Abyssinian officer, who cut off his head, and brought it to the king, who received him with great honour and promise of reward. Peter Lyon stood a silent spectator of the impudence of his competitor; but Arius Dias, who knew the fact, desired the king's attention; saying, at the same time, "That he believed his majesty knew Gragne sufficiently well to suppose that he would not suffer any man to cut off his ear, without having it in his power to sever his head also; and, consequently, that the ear must be in possession of a better man than he that had brought his head to the camp." Upon this, Peter Lyon pulled the ear out of his pocket, and laid it at the king's feet, amidst the acclamations of all present, for his bravery in revenging his old master's death, and his modesty in being content with having done so, without pretending to any other reward.

In this battle, a son of Gragné was taken prisoner, with many other considerable officers; and Del Wumbarea, wife of Gragné, with Nur, son of Mudgid, and a few troops, were obliged to throw themselves, for safety, among the wilds and woods of Atbara, thereby escaping with great difficulty.

The king had now ample revenge on all the Moorish leaders who had reduced his father to such extremities, excepting Joram, who had driven the king from his hiding-place on Mount Isalem, and forced him to cross the Tacazze on foot, with equal danger of being drowned or taken. This leader had, much against his will, been detained from the last battle; but, hoping to be still in time, was advancing by forced marches. The king, informed of his route, de-

tached a party of his army to meet him before the news of the battle could reach him. They having placed themselves in ambush, he fell into it with his army, and was cut to pieces, which closed the account of Claudius with his father's enemies.

During the late war with Gragné, the provinces of Tigré and Sirè had been the principal seat of the war. They were immediately in the way between Dembea, Masuah, and the other Moorish posts upon the Red Sea: the enemy had crossed them in all directions; and a proportionable devastation had been the consequence. Gragné had burnt Axum, and destroyed all the churches and convents in Tigre. The king, now delivered from this enemy, had applied seriously to repair the ravages which had been made in the country. For this purpose he marched with a small army towards Axum, intending afterwards an expedition against the Galla.

In the 13th year of the reign of Claudius, while he was at Sirè, there happened a very remarkable eclipse of the sun, which threw both court and army into great consternation. The prophets and diviners, ignorant monks of the desert, did not let slip so favourable an opportunity of increasing their consequence, by augmenting this panic, and declaring this eclipse to portend nothing less than the renewal of the Moorish war. The year, however, passed in tranquillity and peace. Two old women, relations of the king, are said to have died; and it was in this great calamity that these diviners were to look for the completion of their prophecies. It is from this, however, that I have taken an opportunity to compare and rectify the dates of the principal transactions in the Abyssinian history. Sirè, where the king then resided, was a point very favourable for this application; for, in my journey from Masuah to Gondar, I had settled

the latitude and longitude of that town by many observations.

On the 22d of January 1770, at night, by a medium of different passages of stars over the meridian, and by an observation of the sun the noon of the following day, I found the latitude to be 14° 4′ 35″ north; and the evening of the 23d, I observed an emersion of the first satellite of Jupiter, and by this I concluded the longitude of Sirè to be 38° 0′ 15″ east of the meridian of Greenwich.

The 13th year of the reign of Claudius falls to be in the 1553; and I find that there was a remarkable eclipse of the sun that did happen that same year on the 24th of January N. S., which answers to the 18th of the Ethiopic month Ter. The circumstances of this eclipse were as follows:

	H.	M.	S.	
Beginning - -	7	21	0	A. M.
Middle - - -	8	40	0	
End - - -	10	1	0	

The quantity of the sun's disk obscured was 10 digits; so that this was so near to a total eclipse, it must have made an impression on the spectators' minds, that sufficiently accounts for the alarm and apprehensions it occasioned.

In the month of January, nothing can be more beautiful than the sky in Sirè; not a cloud appears; the sky is all of pale azure, the colour lighter than an European sky, and of inexpressible beauty. The manner of applying this eclipse I shall mention hereafter.

Eclipses of the moon do not seem to be attended to in Abyssinia. The people are very little out in the night, insomuch that I do not find one of these recorded throughout their history. The circumstances

of the season make even those of the sun seldomer visible than in other climates; for in the rainy season, from April to September, the heavens are constantly overcast with clouds, so that it is mere accident if they can catch the moment it happens. But in the month of Ter, that is December and January, the sky is perfectly serene and clear, and at this time our eclipse above mentioned happened.

The king now took into his consideration the state of the church. He had sent for an Abuna from Cairo to succeed Abuna Marcus, and he was now in his way to Abyssinia; while Bermudes, not able to bear this slight, on the other hand, publicly declared to the king, that, having been ambassador from his father, and made his submission to the Roman pontiff, for himself and for his kingdom, he now expected that Claudius would make good his father's engagements, embrace the Roman Catholic religion himself, and, without delay, proclaim it as the etsablished religion in Abyssinia. This the king positively refused to do; and a conversation ensued, which is repeated by Bermudes himself, and sufficiently shews the moderation of the young king, and the fiery brutal zeal of that ignorant, bigotted, ill-mannered priest. Hitherto the Abyssinians heard the Portuguese mass with reverence and attention; and the Portuguese frequented the Abyssinian churches with complacency. They intermarried with each other, and the children seem to have been christened indifferently by the priests of either church. And this might have long continued, had it not been for the impatience of Bermudes.

The king, seeing the danger of connecting himself with such a man, kept up every appearance of attachment to the Alexandrian church. Yet, says the Abyssinian historian* who writes his life, it was well

* MS. Chron. and Annals, Vol. II.

known that Claudius, in his heart, was a private, but perfect convert, to the Romish faith, and kept only from embracing it by his hatred to Bermudes, the constant persuasion of the empress Sabel Wenghel, and the recollection of the misfortunes of his father. Upon being required publicly to submit himself to the See of Rome, he declared that he had made no such promise; that he considered Bermudes as no patriarch, or, at best, only patriarch of the Franks; and that the Abuna of Abyssinia was the chief priest acknowledged by him. Bermudes told him, that he was accursed and excommunicated. Claudius answered, that he, Bermudes, was a Nestorian heretic, and worshipped four gods. Bermudes answered plainly, that he lied; that he would take every Portuguese from him, and return to India, whence he came. The king's answer was, that he wished he would return to India; but, as for the Portuguese, neither they, nor any other person, should leave his kingdom without his permission. Accordingly, having perfectly gained Arius Dias, he gave him the name of Marcus, with the command of the Portuguese, and sent him a standard with his own arms, to use instead of the king of Portugal's. But the Abyssinian page being met, on his return, with the Portuguese standard in his hand, by James Brito, he wrested it from him, felling him to the ground with a blow of his sword on the head.

From expostulations with the king, the matter of religion turned into disputes among the priests, at which the king always assisted in person. If we suppose they were no better sustained on the part of the Abyssinians than they were by the patriarch Bermudes, who we know was no great divine, we cannot expect much that was edifying from the arguments that either of them used. The Portuguese priests

say*, that the king, struck with the ignorance of his own clergy, frequently took the discussion upon himself, which he managed with such force of reasoning, as often put the patriarch to a stand. From verbal disputes, which terminated in nothing, Bermudes was resolved to appeal to arguments in writing; and, with the help of those that were with him of the same faith, a fair state of the differences in question was made in a small book, and presented to the king, who read it with so much pleasure, that he kept it constantly by him. This gave very great offence to the Abyssinian clergy; and the Abuna being now arrived, the king desired of him liberty to read that book, which he refusing, put the young king into so violent a passion, that he called the Abuna, Mahometan and Infidel to his face.

Things growing worse and worse between the Portuguese and Abyssinians, by the incendiary spirit of the brutish Bermudes, from reproaches they came to blows; and this proceeded so far, that the Portuguese one night assaulted the king's tent, where they slew some, and grievously wounded others. Upon this, the king, desirous to estrange him a little from the Portuguese, sent Bermudes to the country of the Gafats, where he gave him large appointments, in hopes that the natural turbulence of his temper would involve him in some difficulties. And there he staid seven months, oppressing the poor ignorant people, and frightening them with the noise of his fire-arms. During this period, the king went on an expedition against the Galla; Bermudes then returned to court, where he found that Arius Dias was dead, and a great many of the Portuguese very well attached to the king. But he began his old work of dissention, in-

* Tellez, lib. 2. cap. 27.

somuch that the king determined to banish him to a mountain for life.

Gaspar de Susa now commanded the Portuguese, instead of Arius Dias, a man equally beloved by his own nation and the king. By his persuasions, and that of Kasmati Robel, the banishment to the mountain was laid aside; but Bermudes was privately persuaded to embark for India while it was yet time; and accordingly he repaired to Dobarwa, where he remained two years, as it should seem, perfectly quiet, neglected, and forlorn; saying daily mass to ten Portuguese, who had settled in that town after the defeat of Don Christopher. He then went to Masuah, and, the monsoon being favourable, he embarked on board a Portuguse vessel, carrying with him the ten Portuguese that were settled at Dobarwa, who all arrived safely at Goa.

St Ignatius, founder of the order of Jesuits, was then at Rome in the dawn of his holiness. The conversion of Abyssinia seemed of so much consequence to him, that he resolved himself to go and be the apostle of the kingdom. But the pope, who had conceived other hopes of him and his order, more important, and nearer at hand, absolutely refused this offer. One of his society, Nugnez Baretto, was, however, fixed upon for patriarch, without any notice being taken of Don John Bermudes. By him Ignatius sent a letter addressed to Claudius, which is to be found in the collections*. It does not, I think, give us any idea of the ingenuity or invention of that great saint. It seems mostly to beg the question, and to contain little else than texts of scripture for his future missionaries to preach and write on, relative to the difference of tenets of the two churches.

* Dated at Rome 16th Feb. 1555. See Tellez, lib. 2. cap. 22.

With this letter, and a number of priests, Baretto came to Goa. But news being arrived there of King Claudius's steady aversion to the Catholic church, it was then thought better, rather than risk the patriarchal dignity, to send Andrew Oviedo, bishop of Hierapolis, and Melchior Carneyro, bishop of Nice, with several other priests, as ambassadors from the governor of India to Claudius, with proper credentials. They arrived safely at Masuah in 1558, five days before the Turkish basha came with his fleet and army, and took possession of Masuah and Arkeeko, though these places had been occupied by the Turks two years before.

When the arrival of these Portuguese was intimated to Claudius, he was exceedingly glad, as he considered them as an accession of strength. But when, on opening the letter, he saw they were priests, he was very much troubled, and said, that he wondered the king of Portugal should meddle so much with his affairs; that he and his predecessors knew no obedience due but to the chair of St Mark, or acknowledged any other patriarch but that of Alexandria; nevertheless, continued he, with his usual goodness and moderation, since they are come so far, out of an honest concern for me, I shall not fail to send proper persons to receive and conduct them. This he did; and the two bishops and their companions were immediately brought to court. It was at this time that the dispute about the two natures began, in which the king took so considerable a part. He was strenuous, eloquent, and vehement in the discussion; when that was ended, he still preserved his usual moderation and kindness for the Portuguese priests.

Nugnez died in India, and Oviedo succeeded him, as patriarch to Abyssinia, it having been so appointed by the pope, from the beginning of their mission.

Claudius had no children; a treaty was therefore set on foot, at the instance of the empress Sabel Wenghel, for ransoming the prince Menas, who had been taken prisoner in his father David's time, and ever since kept in confinement among the Moors, upon a high mountain in Adel. The same had happened to a son of Gragné likewise, made prisoner at the battle of Wainadega, when his father was slain by Claudius. The Moors settled in Abyssinia, as well as all the Abyssinian rebels who had forsaken their allegiance or religion during the war, were to a man violently against setting Menas at liberty, for he was the only brother Claudius had, and a disputed succession was otherwise probable, which was what the Moors longed for. Besides this, Menas was exceedingly brave, of a severe and cruel temper, a mortal enemy to the Mahometans, and at this time in the flower of his age, and perfectly fit to govern. It was not, then, by any means, an eligible measure for those who were naturally the objects of his hatred, to provide such an assistant and successor to Claudius.

Del Wumbarea thought, that, having lost her husband, to be deprived of her son likewise was more than fell to her share in the common cause. She, too, had therefore applied to the basha of Masuah, who looked no farther than to a ransom, and cared very little what prince reigned in Abyssinia. He, therefore, undertook the management of the matter, and declared that he would send Menas to the grand signior, as soon as an answer should come from Constantinople, while Claudius protested, that he would give up Gragné's son to the Portuguese, if the ransom for his brother was not immediately agreed on. This resolution, on both sides, quickly removed all objections. Four thousand ounces of gold were paid

to the Moors and the basha; Menas was released and sent home to Claudius, who thereupon, in his turn, set Ali Gerad, son of Gragné by Del Wumbarea, at liberty, and with him Waraba Guta, brother to the king of Adel; and this finished the transaction.

I must here observe, that what Bermudes * says, that Del Wumbarea was taken prisoner, and given in marriage to Arius Dias, was but a fable, as appears both from the beginning and sequel of the narrative. Del Wumbarea having thus obtained her son, took a very early opportunity of shewing she had not yet forgot the father. Nur, governor of Zeyla, son of Mudgid, who had slain the princes imprisoned upon the mountain of Geshen, was deeply in love with this lady, and had deserved well of her, for he had assisted her in making her escape into Atbara, that day her husband was slain. But this heroine had constantly refused to listen to any proposals; nay, had vowed she never would give her hand in marriage to any man, till he should first bring her the head of Claudius, who had slain her husband. Nur willingly accepted the condition, which gave him few rivals, but rather seemed to be reserved for him, and out of the power of every one else.

Claudius, before this, had marched towards Adel, when he received a message from Nur, that, though Gragné was dead, there still remained a governor of Zeyla, whose family was chosen as a particular instrumen for shedding the blood of the Abyssinian princes; and desired him, therefore, to be prepared, for he was speedily to set out to come to him. Claudius had been employed in various journies through differ-

* See Bermudes's account of these times, printed at Lisbon by Francis Correa, A. D. 1565.

ent parts of his kingdom, repairing the churches which Gragné and the other Moors had burnt; and he was then rebuilding that of Debra Werk (the mountain of gold), when this message of Nur was brought to him. This prince was of a temper never to avoid a challenge; and if he did not march against Nur immediately, he staid no longer than to complete his army as far as possible. He then began his march for Adel, very much, as it is said, against the advice of his friends.

That such advice should be given, at this particular time, appears strange; for till now he had been constantly victorious, and his kingdom was perfectly obedient, which was not the case, when any one of the former battles had been fought. But many prophecies were current in the camp, that the king was to be unfortunate this campaign, and was to lose his life in it. These unfortunate rumours tended much to discourage the army, at the same time that they seemed to have a contrary effect on the king, and to confirm him in his resolution to fight. The truth is, the clergy, who had seen the country delivered by him from the Mahometans, in a manner almost miraculous, and the constancy with which he withstood the Romish patriarch, and frustrated the designs of his father against the Alexandrian church, and who had experienced his extreme liberality in rebuilding the churches, had wrought his young mind to such a degree of enthusiasm, that he was often heard to say, he preferred a death in the middle of an army of infidels, to the longest and most prosperous life that ever fell to the lot of man. It needed not a prophet to have foretold the likely issue of a battle in these circumstances, where the king, careless of life, rather sought death than victory; where the number of Portuguese was so small as to be incapable, of themselves,

to effect any thing; where, even of that number, those who were attached to the king were looked upon as traitors by those of the party of the patriarch; and where the Abyssinians, from their repeated quarrels and disputes, heartily hated them all.

The armies were ready to engage, when the chief priest of Debra Libanos came to the king, to tell him a dream, or vision, which warned him not to fight. But the Moors were then advancing, and the king on horseback made no reply, but marched briskly forward to the enemy. The cowardly Abyssinians, upon the first fire, fled, leaving the king engaged in the middle of the Moorish army, with twenty horse, and eighteen Portuguese musqueteers, who were all slain around his person; and he himself fell, after fighting manfully, and receiving twenty wounds. His head was cut off, and by Nur delivered to Del Wumbarea, who directed it to be tied by the hair to the branch of a tree before her door, that she might keep it constantly in sight. There it remained three years, till it was purchased from her by an Armenian merchant, her first grief, having, it is probable, subsided, upon the acquisition of a new husband. The merchant carried the head to Antioch, and buried it there, in the sepulchre of a saint of the same name.

Thus died Claudius, in the 19th year of his reign, who, by his virtues and capacity, might hold a first place among any series of kings we have known; victorious in every action he fought, except in that one only in which he died. A great slaughter was made after this among the routed, and many of the first nobility were slain in endeavouring to escape; among the rest, the prophet from Debra Lebanos; his vision, by which he knew the king's death, not having extended so far as to reveal his own. The Abyssinians immediately transferred the name of this prince into

their catalogue of saints, and he is called St Claudius, in that country, to this day. Though endowed with every other virtue that entitled him to a place in the kalendar, he seems to have wanted one—that of dying in charity with his enemies.

This battle was fought on the 22d March, 1559; and the victory gained by Nur was complete. The king and most of his principal officers were slain; great part of the army taken prisoners, the rest dispersed, and the camp plundered; so that no Moorish general had ever returned home with the glory that he did. But afterwards, in his behaviour, he exhibited a spectacle more memorable, and that did him more honour than the victory itself; for, when he drew near to Adel, he clothed himself in poor attire, like a common soldier, and bare-headed, mounted on an ordinary mule, with an old saddle and tattered accoutrements; he forbade the songs and praise with which it is usual to meet conquerors in that country, when returning with victory from the field. He declined, also, all share in the success of that day; declaring that the whole of it was due to God alone, to whose mercy and immediate interposition he owed the destruction of the Christian army.

The unworthy and unfortunate John Bermudes, having arrived in Portugal from India, continued there till his death; and, in the inscription over his tomb, is called only patriarch of Alexandria. Yet it is clear, from the history of these times, that he was first ordained by the old patriarch Marcus; and that the pope, Paul III., only confirmed the ordination of this heretical schismatic prelate, though we have stated that he was ordained by the pope, according to his own assertion, to be patriarch of Alexandria, Abyssinia, and the sea. Bermudes lived many years after this, and never resigned any of his charges.

However, on his arrival in Europe, several supposed well-meaning persons at Rome began to discourse among themselves, as if the conversion of Abyssinia had not had a fair trial, when trusted in the hands of such a man as Bermudes. Scandalous stories, as to his moral character, were propagated to strengthen this. He was said to have stolen a golden cup in Abyssinia*; but this does not appear in any shape probable, or like the manners of the man. He was a simple, ill-bred zealot, exceedingly vain, but in nowise coveting riches or gain of any sort. Sebastian, king of Portugal, hearing the bad posture of the Catholic religion in Abyssinia, and the small hopes of the conversion of that country, besought the pope to send all the missionaries that were in that kingdom to preach the gospel in Japan: but Oviedo stated such strong reasons in his letter to Rome, that he was confirmed in the mission of Ethiopia.

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* Purch. Vol. II.

MENAS, OR ADAMAS SEGUED.

From 1559 to 1563.

Baharnagash rebels, proclaims Tascar King—Defeated by the King—Cedes Dobarwa to the Turks, and makes a League with the Basha of Masuah.

MENAS succeeded his brother Claudius, and found his kingdom in almost as great confusion as it had been left by his father David. His first campaign was against Radaet the Jew. The king attacked him at his strongest post in Samen, where he fought him with various success; and the enterprise did not seem much advanced, when a hermit, residing in these mountains, probably tired with the neighbourhood of such troublesome people, came and told the king, it had been revealed to him, that the conquest of the Jews was not allotted to him, as their time was not yet come,

While the king seemed disposed to avail himself of the hermit's warning, as a decent excuse to get rid of an affair that did not succeed to his mind, an accident happened, which determined him to quit his present undertaking. Two men, shepherds of Ebenaat in Belessen, from what injury is not known, engaged two of the king's servants, who were their relations,

to introduce them into Menas's tent while sleeping, with a design to murder him in his bed. While they were preparing to execute their intention, one of them stumbled over the lamp that was burning, and threw it down. The king awakening, and challenging him with a loud voice, the assassin struck at him with his knife, but so feebly from the fright, that he dropt the weapon upon the king's cloak, without hurting him. They fled immediately out of the tent, but were taken at Ebenaat the next day, and brought back to the king, who gave orders to the judges to try them: they were both condemned, the one to be thrust through with lances, the other to be stoned to death; after which, both their bodies were thrown to the dogs and the beasts of the field, as is practised constantly in all cases of high treason.

The second year of the reign of Menas was ushered in by a conspiracy among the principal men of his court, at the head of which was Isaac Baharnagash, an old and tried servant of his brother Claudius. This officer had been ill-treated by Menas, in the beginning of his reign; and, knowing the prince's violent and cruel disposition, he could not persuade himself that he was yet in safety.

Menas, to suppress this rebellion in its infancy, sent Zara Johannes, an old officer, before him, with what forces he could collect in the instant; but Isaac, informed of the bad state of that army, and consequently of his own superiority, left him no time to strengthen himself, but fell furiously upon him, and, with little resistance, dispersed his army. This loss did not discourage the king; he had assembled a very considerable force, and, desirous still to increase it, he was advancing slowly, that he might collect the scattered remains of the army that had been defeated. The Baharnagash, though victorious, saw with some

concern that he could not avoid the king, whose courage and capacity, both as a soldier and a general, left him every thing to fear for his success.

Ever since the massacre of the princes upon Mount Geshen, by Visir Mudgid, in the reign of David III. none of the remains of the royal family had been confined as heretofore. Tascar, Menas's nephew was then at liberty, and, to strengthen his cause, was proclaimed king by the Baharnagash, soon after the defeat of his uncle's army under Zara Johannes. He was a prince very mild and affable in his manners, in all respects unlike the reigning king.

It was on the 1st of July 1561, that the king attacked the Baharnagash in the plain of Woggora; and, having entirely routed his army, Tascar was taken prisoner, and ordered by his uncle to be carried to the brink of the high rock of Lamalmon, and, having been thrown over the steep precipice, he was dashed to pieces. Isaac himself escaped very narrowly, flying to the frontier of his government in the neighbourhood of Masuah. The Baharnagash comprehended distinctly to what a dangerous situation he was now reduced. No hopes of safety remained but in a peace with the basha. This at first appeared not easy to obtain; for, while Isaac remained in his duty in the reign of Claudius, he had fought with the basha, and lost his brother in the engagement. But present necessity overcame the memory of past injuries.

Samur Basha was a man of capacity and temper; he had been in possession of Masuah ever since the year 1558. He saw his own evident interest in the measure, and appeared fully as forward as the Baharnagash to complete it. Isaac ceded Dobarwa to the basha, and put him into immediate possession of it, and all the low country between that and Masuah. By this

acquisition, the Turks, before masters of the sea-coast, became possessed of the whole of the flat country corresponding thereto, as far as the mountains. Dobarwa is a large trading town, situated in a country abounding with provisions of all kinds which Masuah wanted; and it was the key of the province of Tigré, and the high land of Abyssinia.

Menas, at his accession, had received kindly the compliments of congratulation made by the Portuguese patriarch, Oviedo. But hearing that he still continued to preach, and that the effect of this was frequent divisions and animosities among the people, he called him into his presence, and strictly commanded him to desist; which the patriarch positively refusing, the king lost all patience, and fell violently upon him, beating him without mercy, tearing his clothes and beard, and taking his chalice from him, that he might prevent him from saying mass. He then banished him to a desert mountain, together with Francis Lopez, where, for seven months, he endured all manner of hardships.

The king, in the mean time, published many rigorous proclamations against the Portuguese. He would not permit them to marry with Abyssinians. Those, that were already married, he forbade to go to the Catholic churches with their husbands; and, having again called the patriarch into his presence, he ordered him forthwith to leave his kingdom upon pain of death. But Oviedo, who seems to have had an ambition to be the proto-martyr, refused absolutely to obey these commands. He declared that the orders of God were those he obeyed, not the sinful ordinances of man; and, letting slip his cloak from his shoulders, he offered his bare neck to the king to strike. This answer and gesture so incensed Menas, that, drawing his sword, he would have very soon put the patriarch

in possession of the martyrdom he coveted, had it not been for the interposition of the queen, and officers that stood round him.

Oviedo, after having been again soundly beaten, was banished a second time to the mountain; and in this sentence were included all the rest of the Portuguese, priests as well as others. But the bishop would not submit to this punishment, but with the Portuguese, his countrymen, joined the Baharnagash, who had already completed his treaty with Samur Basha.

Isaac, before the Portuguese priests, had shewn a desire of becoming Catholic, and of protecting, or even embracing, their religion; and they, on their part, had assured him of a powerful and speedy succour from India, which was just what he wanted; and with this view he had placed himself to the greatest advantage, avoiding a battle, and awaiting those auxiliaries, of the arrival of which the king was very apprehensive. But the season of ships coming from India had passed without any appearance of Portuguese, and the king was resolved to try his fortune, without expecting what another season might produce. On the other hand, Isaac, strengthened by his league with the basha, thought himself in a condition to take the field, rather than to lessen his reputation by constantly declining battle.

In these dispositions both armies met, and the confederates were again beaten by the king, with very little loss or resistance. This battle was fought on the 20th of April 1562. Immediately after this victory, the king marched to Shoa, and sent several detachments of his army before him to surprise the robbers called Dobas, and drive off their cattle. What he intended by retiring so far from his enemies, the Baharnagash and Basha, is what we do not know.

Both of them were yet alive, but probably so weakened by their last defeat as to leave no apprehensions of being able to molest the country by any incursions.

The king, being advanced into the province of Ogge, was taken ill of the Kolla, or low-country fever, and, after a few days illness, died there on the 13th of January 1563, leaving three sons, Sertza Denghel, who succeeded him, Tascar, and Lesana Christos.

Some European historians * have advanced, that Menas was defeated and slain in this last engagement just now mentioned. This, however, is expressly contradicted in the annals of these times, which mention the death of the king, in the terms I have here related; nor were either of the chiefs of the rebels, the Basha or Baharnagash, slain that day. The rebellion still continued, Isaac having proclaimed a prince of the name of John to be king, in place of Tascar, his deceased brother.

Menas was a prince of a very morose and violent disposition, but very well adapted to the time in which he lived; brave in his person, active and attentive to the affairs of government. He was sober, and an enemy to all sorts of pleasure; frugal, and, in his dress, or stile of living, little different from any soldier in his army.

These qualities made him feared by the great without being beloved by the common soldiers, accustomed to the liberality and magnificence of Claudius; and this want of popularity gave the Romish priests an opportunity to blacken his character, beyond what in truth he deserved. Thus, they say, that he had changed his religion during his imprisonment, and

* Ludolf, lib. 2. cap. 6.

turned Mahometan, and that it was from the Moors he learned that ferocity of manners. But to this the answer is easy; that the manners of his own countrymen, that is, of mountaineers, without any profession but war and blood, in which they had been exercised for centuries, were, probably, of themselves, much more fierce and barbarous than any he could learn among the people of Adel, occupied from time immemorial in commerce and the pursuit of riches, and necessarily engaged in an honest intercourse, and practice of hospitality, with all the various nations that traded with them. Besides, were this otherwise, he never had any society with these Moors. Banishment to the top of a mountain* would have been his fate in Abyssinia, had he lived a few years earlier or later than he did. Yet the mountain, upon which the royal family was confined, had not yet produced one of such savage manners; and it is not probable that he was more strictly guarded in Adel than he would have been in his own country.

As to his religion, we can only say that he abhorred the Romish faith, from the behaviour of those that professed it; and, that he had abundant reason so to do, we need only appeal to their conduct in the preceding reign, according to the accounts given by the Catholics themselves. Let any man consider a king such as Claudius was; seated on his throne in the midst of his courtiers and captains; cursed and excommunicated; called heretic and liar to his face, by an ignorant peasant and stranger, such as John Bermudes; attacked in the night, and forced to fly for his life, by a body of

* To Geshen or Ambaselé.

strangers, who depended upon him for their daily bread. Next consider Menas, at his first accession, desiring their patriarch to desist from preaching a religion that was fatal to the quiet of his kingdom, by sowing dissentions in it, as it had done in the two preceding reigns; and then figure a fanatic priest, declaring that he would neither depart nor obey these orders; then say what would have been done to strangers in France, Spain, or Portugal, that had behaved in this manner to the sovereign or ministers of these countries. Add to this, that all the Portuguese, to a man, appeared in the army of a rebel subject in the last battle, supporting the cause of a pretender to his crown. If, upon a fair review of all this, it is any matter of surprise that he should be averse to such people and behaviour, I am no judge of the fair feelings of man, and the duty a prince owes to himself or posterity, his country or dignity.

As to his inclination to the Mahometan religion, the fact is, that he opposed it, even with his sword, during his whole reign, and never swerved from his attachment to the church of Alexandria, or his friendship and respect to the Abuna Yousef, to the end of his life, as far as we can learn from history. And least, of all people in the world, does it become the Roman Catholics to accuse him of being Mahometan; because a letter is still extant to Menas from Pope Paul III *, wherein the pope styles him beloved *son in Christ*, and the *most holy of priests*.

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* See Le Grande's History of Abyssinia.

SERTZA DENGHEL, OR MELEC SEGUED.

From 1563 to 1595.

King crowned at Axum—Abyssinia invaded by the Galla—Account of that People—The King defeats the Army of Adel—Beats the Falasha, and kills their King—Battle of the Mareb—Basha slain, and Turks expelled from Dobarwa—King is poisoned—Names Za Denghel his successor.

MENAS was succeeded by his son, Sertza Denghel, who took the name of Melec Segued. He was only twelve years old when he came to the throne, and was crowned at Axum with all the ancient ceremonies. The beginning of his reign was marked by a mutiny of his soldiers, who, joining themselves to some Mahometans, plundered the town, and then disbanded. A misunderstanding also happened with Ayto Hamelmal, son to Romana Werk, daughter of Hatzé Naod, which threatened many misfortunes in its consequences.

Tecla Asfadin, governor of Tigré, was ordered by the king to march against him; and the armies fought with equal advantage. But Hamelmal dying soon after, his party dispersed without farther trouble. Fasil, too, his cousin, who had been appointed governor of

Damot, rebelled soon after; and was defeated by the king, who this year (the fourth of his reign) commanded his army, for the first time, in person, and greatly contributed to the victory, though then but sixteen years of age.

The sixth year of his reign he marched against a clan of Galla, called Azé; whom he often beat, staying in the country two whole years. Upon his return, he met the Baharnagash Isaac and Harla, and other malecontents, when a sort of pacification followed; and, having received from the rebels considerable presents, he sat down at Dobit, a small town in Dembea, where he passed the winter.

All this time Oviedo and the Portuguese did not appear at court. The king, however, did not molest the priests in their baptisms, preachings, or any of their functions. He often spake favourably of their moral characters, their sobriety, patience, and the decency of their lives; but he condemned decisively the whole of their religious tenets, which he pronounced to be full of danger and contradiction, and destructive of civil order and monarchical government. At this period the Galla again made an irruption into Gojam.

It is now time we should speak of this nation, which has contributed more to weakening and reducing the Abyssinian empire, than all its civil wars and foreign enemies put together. When I spoke of the languages of the several nations in Abyssinia, I took occasion merely to mention the origin of these Galla, and their progress northward, till their first hostile appearance in Abyssinia. I shall now proceed to lay before the reader what further I have collected concerning them. Many of them were in the king's service while I was in Abyssinia; and, from a multitude of conversations I had with all kinds of them, I

flatter myself I have gathered the best accounts regarding these tribes.

The Galla are a very numerous nation of Shepherds, who probably lived under or beyond the Line. What the cause of their emigration was, we cannot pretend to say with certainty; but they have, for many years, been in an uniform progress northward. They were at first all infantry; and said the country they came from would not permit horses to breed in it, as is the case in 13° north of the Line, round Sennaar. Upon coming northward, and conquering the Abyssinian provinces, and the small Mahometan districts bordering on them, they have acquired a breed of horses, which they have multiplied so industriously, that they are become a nation of cavalry, and now hold their infantry in very little esteem.

As under the Line, to the south of Abyssinia, the land is exceedingly high, and the sun seldom makes its appearance, on account of the continual rains, the Galla are consequently of a brown complexion, with long black hair. Some, indeed, who live in the vallies of the low country, are perfectly black. Although the principal food of this people, at first, was milk and butter, yet, when they advanced into drier climates, they learned of the Abyssinians to plough and sow the fields, and to make bread. They seem to affect the number seven, and have divided their immense multitude threefold by that number. They all agree, that, when the nation advanced to the Abyssinian frontiers, they were then in the centre of the continent. The ground beginning to rise before them, seven of their tribes, or nations, filed off to the east towards the Indian Ocean; and, after making settlements there, and multiplying exceedingly, they marched forward due south into Bali and Dawaro, which they first wasted by constant incursions, then conquer-

ed, and settled there in the reign of David III. in 1537.

Another division, of seven tribes, went off to the west about the same time, and spread themselves in another semicircle round the south side of the Nile, and all along its banks round Gojam, and to the east behind the country of the Agows (which are on the east side of the Nile), to that of the Gongas and Gafats. The high woody banks of this river have hitherto been their barrier to the southward; not but that they have often fought for, and often conquered, and still oftener plundered, the countries on the Abyssinian side of that river; and, from this reign downwards, the scene of action with the Abyssinians has constantly been on the east side of the river. All I mean is, they have never made a settlement on the Abyssinian side of the Nile, except such tribes of them as, from wars among themselves, have gone over to the king of Abyssinia, and obtained lands on the banks of that river, opposite to the nation they have revolted from, against which they have ever been the securest bulwark.

A third division, of seven tribes, remained in the centre, due south of the low country of Shoa; and these are the least known, as having made the fewest incursions. They have, indeed, possessed Walaka, a small province between Amhara and Shoa; but this has been permitted politically by the governor of Shoa, as a barrier between him and Abyssinia, on whose sovereign he scarcely acknowledges any dependence but for form's sake, his province being at present an hereditary government, descending from father to son.

All these tribes of Galla gird Abyssinia round at all points from east to west, making inroads, and burning and murdering all that fall into their hands. The pri-

vities of the men they cut off, dry, and hang them up in their houses. They are so merciless, as to spare not even women with child, whom they rip up, in hopes of destroying a male. The western parts of these Galla, which surround the peninsula of Gojam and Damot, are called the Boren Galla; and those that are to the east are named Bertuma Galla, though this last word is seldom used in history, where the Galla to the westward are called Boren; and the others Galla merely, without any other addition. All these tribes, though the most cruel that ever appeared in any country, are yet governed by the strictest discipline at home, where the smallest broil, or quarrel, among individuals, is taken cognizance of, and receives immediate punishment.

Each of the three divisions of Galla elects a king; that is, there is a king for every seven tribes. There is also a kind of nobility among them, from whose families alone the sovereign can be chosen. But there are certain degrees of merit (all warlike) that raise, from time to time, their plebeian families to nobility, and the right of suffrage. No one of these nobles can be elected till past forty years of age, unless he has slain, with his own hand, a number of men, which, added to his years, makes up forty.

The council of each of the seven tribes first meets separately in its own district. Here it determines how many are necessary to be left behind for the governing, guarding, and cultivating the territory; while those, fixed upon by most votes, go as delegates to meet the representatives of the other nations at the domicil, or head-quarters of the king, among the tribe from which the sovereign of the last seven years was taken. Here they sit down under a tree, which seems to be sacred, and the god of all the nations. It

is called Wanzey*; has a white flower, and a great quantity of foliage; and is very common in Abyssinia. After a variety of votes, the number of candidates is reduced to four, and the suffrages of six of these nations go then no further; but the seventh, whose turn it is to have a king out of their tribe, choose, from among the four, one, whom they crown with a garland of Wanzey, and put a sceptre, or bludgeon, of that wood in his hands, which they call Buco.

The king of the western Galla is styled Lubo, the other Mooty. At this assembly, the king allots to each their scene of murder and rapine; but limits them always to speedy returns, in case the body of the nation should have occasion for them. The Galla are reputed very good soldiers for surprise, and in the first attack, but have not constancy or perseverance. They accomplish incredible marches; swim rivers holding by the horse's tail (an exercise to which both they and their horses are perfectly trained); do the utmost mischief possible in the shortest time; and rarely return by the same way they came. They are excellent light horse for a regular army in an enemy's country.

Iron is very scarce among them; so that their principal arms are poles sharpened at the end, and hardened in the fire, which they use like lances. Their shields are made of bull's-hides of a single fold; so that they are very subject to warp in heat, or become too pliable and soft in wet weather. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, the report of their cruelty made such an impression upon the Abyssinians, that on their first engagements, they rarely stood firmly the

* See the article Wanzey in the Appendix.

Galla's first onset. Besides this, the shrill and very barbarous noise they are always used to make at the moment they charge, used to terrify the horses and riders; so that a flight generally followed the attack made by Galla horse.

These melancholy and frantic howls I had occasion to hear often in those engagements that happened while I was in Abyssinia. The Edjow, a body of Galla who had been in the late king Joas's service, and were relations to him by his mother, who was of that clan of southern Galla, were constantly in the rebel army, always in the most disaffected part, and, with the troops of Begemder and Lasta, attacked the king's household, where he was in person; and, though they behaved with a bravery even to rashness, most of them lost their lives, upon the long pikes of the king's black horse, without ever doing any notable execution, as these horses were too well trained to be at all moved with their shrieks, when they charged, though their bravery and fidelity merited a better fate.

The women are said to be very fruitful. They do not confine themselves even a day after labour, but wash, and return to their work immediately. They plough, sow, and reap. The cattle tread out the corn; but the men are the herdsmen, and take charge of the cattle in the fields.

Both sexes are something less than the middle size, exceedingly light and agile. Both, but especially the men, plait their hair with the bowels and guts of oxen, which they wear likewise, like belts, twisted round their middle; and these, as they putrefy, occasion a terrible stench. Both copiously anoint their heads and bodies with butter, or melted grease, which is continually raining from them, and which indicates that they came from a country hotter than that which they now possess. They greatly resemble the Hot-

tentots in this filthy taste of dress. The rest of their body is naked; a piece of skin only covers them before; and they wear a goat's skin on their shoulders, in shape of a woman's handkerchief, or tippet.

It has been said*, that no religion was ever discovered among them. I imagine, that the facts upon which this opinion is founded have never been sufficiently investigated. The Wanzey-tree, under which their kings are crowned, is avowedly worshipped as a god in every tribe. They have certain stones also, for an object of their devotion; which I never could sufficiently understand to give further description of them. But they certainly pay adoration to the moon, especially the new moon; for of this I have frequently been a witness. They likewise worship certain stars in particular positions, and at different times of the year; and are, in my opinion, still in the ancient religion of Sabaism. All of them believe that, after death, they are to live again; that they are to rise with their body, as they were on earth, to enter into another life, they know not where, but they are to be in a state of body infinitely more perfect than the present; and are to die no more, nor suffer grief, sickness, or trouble of any kind. They have very obscure, or no ideas at all, of future punishment; but their reward is to be a moderate state of enjoyment, with the same family and persons with which they lived on earth. And this is very nearly the same belief with the other Pagan nations in Africa with which I have conversed intimately; and this is what writers generally call a belief of the immortality of the soul. Nor did I ever know one savage that had a more dis-

* Jerome Lobo, Hist. of Abyssinia ap. Le Grande.

tinct idea of it, or ever separated it from the immortality of the body *.

The Galla to the south are mostly Mahometans; on the east and west, chiefly Pagans. They intermarry with each other; but suffer no strangers to live among them. The Moors, however, by courage, patience, and attention, have found out the means of trading with them in a tolerable degree of safety. The goods they carry are coarse Surat blue cloths, called marowty; also myrrh and salt. This last is the principal and most valuable article.

The Galla sometimes marry Abyssinian women; but the issue of those marriages is incapable of all employment. Their form of marriages is the following: The bridegroom, standing before the parents of the bride, holds grass in his right hand, and the dung of a cow in his left. He then says, "May this never enter, nor this ever come out, if he does not do what he promises;" that is, may the grass never enter the cow's mouth to feed her, or may she die before it is discharged. Matrimonial vows, moreover, are very simple; he swears to his bride, that he will give her meat and drink while living, and bury her when dead.

Polygamy is allowed among them; but the men are commonly content with one wife. Such, indeed, is their moderation in this respect, that it is the women that solicit the men to increase the number of their wives. The love of their children seems to get a speedy ascendency over passion and pleasure, and is a noble part of the character of these savages that ought not to be forgot. A young woman, having a child or two by her husband, entreats and solicits him that he would take another wife; when she names to him all the beautiful girls of her acquaintance, espe-

* This fact forms a true statement of the "longing after immortality," found amongst all savage tribes.—E.

cially those that she thinks likeliest to have large families. After the husband has made his choice, she goes to the tent of the young woman, and sits behind it in a supplicant posture, till she has excited the attention of the family within. She, then, with an audible voice, declares who she is; that she is daughter of such a one; that her husband has all the qualifications for making a woman happy; that she has only two children by him; and, as her family is so small, she comes to solicit their daughter for her husband's wife, that their families may be joined together, and be strong; and that her children, from their being few in number, may not fall a prey to their enemies in the day of battle: for the Galla always fight in families, whether against one another, or against other enemies.

When she has thus obtained a wife for her husband, she carries her home, and puts her to bed with her husband; where, having left her, she feasts with the bride's relations. There the children of the first marriage are produced, and the men of the bride's family put each their hands upon these children's heads, and afterwards take the oath in the usual manner, to live and die with them as their own offspring. The children, then, after this species of adoption, go to their relations, and visit them for the space of seven days. All that time the husband remains at home, in possession of his new bride; at the end of which he gives a feast, when the first wife is seated by her husband, and the young one serves the whole company. The first wife, from this day, keeps her precedence; and the second is treated by the first wife like a grown-up daughter. I believe it would be very long before the love of their families would introduce this custom among the young women of Britain.

When a father dies, and leaves many children, the eldest succeeds to the whole inheritance without divi-

sion; nor is he obliged, at any time, or by any circumstance, to give his brothers a part afterwards. If the father is alive when the son first begins to shave his head, which is a declaration of manhood, he gives two or three milk-cows, or more, according to his rank and fortune. These, and all their produce, remain the property of the child to whom they were given by his father; and these the brother is obliged to pay to him upon his father's death, in the same number and kind. The eldest brother is, moreover, obliged to give the sister, whenever she is marriageable, whatever other provision the father may have made in his lifetime for her, with all its increase from the day of the donation.

When the father becomes old, and unfit for war, he is obliged to surrender his whole effects to his eldest son, who is bound to give him aliment, and nothing else; and, when the eldest brother dies, leaving younger brothers behind him, and a widow young enough to bear children, the youngest brother of all is obliged to marry her; but the children of the marriage are always accounted as if they were the eldest brother's; nor does this marriage of the youngest brother to the widow, entitle him to any part of the deceased's fortune.

The southern Galla are called Elma Kilelloo *, Elma Gooderoo, Elma Robali, Elma Doolo, Elma Bodena, Elma Horreta, and Elma Michaeli; these are the seven southern nations which the Mahometan traders pass through in their way to Narea, the southernmost country the Abyssinians ever conquered.

The western Galla, for their principal clans, have the Djawi, Edjow or Ayzo, and Toluma; and these were the clans we principally fought with when I was in Abyssinia. They are chiefly Pagans. Some of

* Elma, or Yalema, in Galla, children.—E.

their children, who were left young in court when their fathers fled, after the murder of the late king their master, were better Christians, and better soldiers, than any Abyssinians we had.

It is not a matter of small curiosity to know what is their food, that is so easy of carriage as to enable them to traverse immense deserts, that they may, without warning, fall upon the towns and villages in the cultivated country of Abyssinia. This is nothing but coffee roasted, till it can be pulverised, and then mixed with butter to a consistency that will suffer it to be rolled up in balls, and put in a leather bag. A ball of this composition, between the circumference of a shilling and half-a-crown, about the size of a billiard-ball, keeps them, they say, in strength and spirits during a whole day's fatigue, better than a loaf of bread, or a meal of meat. Its name in Arabia and Abyssinia is Bun; but I apprehend its true name is Caffe, from Caffa, the southern province of Narea, whence it is first said to have come: It is white in the bean. The coffee-tree is the wood of the country, produced spontaneously everywhere in great abundance, from Caffa to the banks of the Nile.

Thus much for this remarkable nation, whose language is perfectly different from any in Abyssinia, and is the same throughout all the tribes, with very little variation of dialect. This is a nation that has conquered some of the finest provinces of Abyssinia, and of whose inroads we shall hereafter have occasion to speak continually; and it is very difficult to say how far they might not have accomplished the conquest of the whole, had not Providence interposed in a manner little expected, but more efficacious than a thousand armies, and all the inventions of man.

The Galla, before their inroads into Abyssinia, had never in their own country seen or heard of the smallpox. This disease met them in the Abyssinian vil-

lages. It raged among them with such violence, that whole provinces, conquered by them, became half-desert; and, in many places, they were forced to become tributary to those whom before they kept in continual fear. But this did not happen till the reign of Yasous the Great, at the beginning of the present century, where we shall take fresh notice of it; and now proceed with what remains of the reign of Sertza Denghel, whom we left with his army in the ninth year of his reign, residing at Dobit, a small town in Dembea, watching the motion of the rebels, Isaac Baharnagash and others his confederates.

The tenth year of his reign, as soon as the weather permitted him, the king went into Gojam to oppose the inroads of the Djawi, a clan of the western or Boren Galla, who then were in possession of the Buco, or royal dignity, among the seven nations. But they had repassed the Nile upon the first news of the king's march, without having time to waste the country. The king then went to winter in Bizamo, which is south of the Nile, the native country of these Galla, the Djawi.

If this nation, the Galla, has deserved ill of the Abyssinians by the frequent inroads made into their country, they must, however, confess one obligation, that in the end they entirely ruined their ancient enemy, the Mahometan king of Adel, and reduced him to a state of perfect insignificance.

Sertza Denghel then returned with his army into Dembea, where, finding the militia of that province much disaffected by communication with the Moorish soldiers settled among them from Gragné's time to this day, and that most of them had in their hearts forsaken the Christian religion, and were all ready to fail in their allegiance, he assembled the greatest part of them without their arms, and, surrounding them

with his soldiers, cut them to pieces, to the number of 3000 men.

In the 13th year of his reign, Mahomet, king of Adel, marched out of his own country, with the view of joining the Basha and Baharnagash. But the king, ever watchful over the motions of his enemies, surprised the Baharnagash before his junction either with Mahomet or the basha, and defeated or dispersed his army, obliging him to fly in disguise, with the utmost danger of being taken prisoner, to hide himself with the basha at Dobarwa. He then appointed Darguta governor of Tigré, an old and experienced officer, giving him the charge of the province, and to watch the basha; and, leaving with him his wounded (and in their place taking some fresh soldiers from Darguta), he, by forced marches, endeavoured to meet Mahomet, who had not heard of his victory over Isaac; and being informed that the king of Adel was encamped on the other side of the river Wali, having passed it to join Isaac, the king, by a sudden movement, crossed the river, and came opposite to Mahomet's quarters, who was then striking his tents, having just heard of the fate of the Baharnagash. Mahomet and his whole army were struck with a panic at this unexpected appearance of the king on the opposite side of the river, which had cut off his retreat to Adel. Fearing, however, there might still be an enemy behind him, and that he should be hemmed in between both, he resolved to pass; but did it in so tumultuous a manner, that the king's army had no trouble but to slaughter those who arrived at the opposite bank. Great part of the cavalry, seeing the fate of their companions at the ford, attempted to pass above and below by swimming: but, though the river was deep and smooth, the banks were high, and many were drowned, not being able to scramble up on the other side. Many were also destroyed by stones, and

the lances of Sertza Denghel's men, from the banks above; some passed, however, joining Mahomet, and leaving the rest of the army to attempt a passage at the ford, crossed with the utmost speed lower down the river without being pursued, and carried the news of their own defeat to Adel.

The whole Moorish army perished this day, except the horse, either by the sword or in the river; nor had the Moors received so severe a blow since the defeat of Gragné by Claudius. The king then decamped, and took post at Zarroder, on the frontiers of Adel, with a design to winter there, and lay waste the country, into which he intended to march as soon as the fair weather returned. But it was the misfortune of this great prince, that his enemies were situated at the two most distant extremities of the kingdom. For the Galla attacked Gojam on the west, at the very time he prepared to enter Adel on the east. Without loss of time, however, he traversed the whole kingdom of Abyssinia, and came up with the Boren Galla upon the river Madge, but no action of consequence followed. The Galla attempting the king's camp in the night, and finding themselves too weak to carry it, retreated immediately into their own country. While returning to Dembea, he met a party of the Falasha, called Abati, at Wainadega, and entirely destroyed them, so that not one escaped.

The king was now so formidable, that no army of the enemy dared to face him; and he obliged the Falasha to give up their king Radaet, whom he banished to Wadge; and the four following years he spent in ravaging the country of his enemies the Galla, in Shat and Bed, and that of the Falasha in Samen and Serke, where he beat Caliph king of the Falasha, who had succeeded Radaet.

The Galla, in advancing towards Gojam and Damot, had overrun the whole low country between the

mountains of Narea and the Nile. The king, desirous to open a communication with a country where there was a great trade, especially for gold, crossed the Nile in his way to that province, the Galla flying everywhere before him. He was received with very great joy by the prince of that country, who looked upon him as his deliverer from those cruel enemies. Here he received many rich presents, more particularly a large quantity of gold; and he wintered at Cutheny, in that province where Abba Hedar, his brother, died, having been blown up with gun-powder, with his wife and children. The Nareans desired, this year, to be admitted to the Christian faith; and they were converted and baptised by a mission of priests sent by the king for that purpose *.

At the time he was rescuing the kingdom of Narea, Cadward Basha, a young officer of merit and reputation, lately come from Constantinople as basha of Masuah, had begun his command with making inroads into Tigré, and driving off a number of the inhabitants into slavery. The king, necessarily engaged at a distance, suffered these injuries with a degree of impatience; and, after having provided for the security of the several countries immediately near him, he marched with his army directly for Woggora, committing every degree of excess in his march, in order to provoke the Falasha to descend from their heights and offer him battle.

A frugal economical people, such as the Jews are, could not bear to see their cattle and crops destroyed in so wanton a manner before their very faces. They came, therefore, down in immense numbers to attack the king, one of the most excellent generals Abyssinia ever had, at the head of a small, but veteran army. Geshen, brother of the famous Gideon, was then king

* Vide Annals, Vol. II. Life of S. Denghel.—E.

of the Jews, and commanded the army of his countrymen. The battle was fought on the plain of Woggora on the 19th of January 1594, with the success that was to be expected. Four thousand of the Jewish army were slain upon the spot; and, among them, Geshen, their unfortunate king and leader.

After this victory, Sertza Denghel marched his army into Kuara, through the country where the Jews had many strong-holds, and received everywhere their submission. Then turning to the left, he came through the country of the Shangalla, called Wombarea, and so to that of the Agows. There he heard that new troubles were meditating in Damot; but the inhabitants of that province were not yet ripe enough to break out into open rebellion.

That he might not, therefore, have two enemies at such a distance from each other upon his hands at once, this year, as soon as the rains were over, he determined to march and attack the basha. The basha was very soon informed of his designs, and as soon prepared to meet them; so that the king found him already in the field, encamped on his own side of the Mareb, but without having committed, till then, any act of hostility. He marched out of his camp, and formed, upon seeing the royal army approach; leaving a sufficient field for the king to draw up in, if he should incline to cross the river, and attack him.

This confident, rather than prudent, conduct of the basha, did not intimidate the king, who being used to improve every advantage coolly, and without bravado, embraced this very opportunity his enemy chose to give him. He formed, therefore, on his own side of the Mareb, and passed it in as good order as possible, considering it is a swift stream, and very deep at that season of the year. He halted several times while his men were in the water, to put them again in order, as

if he had expected to be attacked the moment he landed on the other side. The basha, a man of knowledge in his profession, who saw this cautious conduct of the king, is said to have cried out, "How unlike he is to what I have heard of his father!" alluding to the general rash behaviour of the late king, Menas, whilst at the head of his army.

Sertza Denghel having left all his baggage on the other side, and passed the river, drew up his army in the same deliberate manner in which he had crossed the Mareb, and formed opposite to the basha; as if he had been acting under him, and by his orders, availing himself with great attention of all the advantages the ground could afford him. The basha, confident in the superior valour of his troops, thought, now he had got the king between him and the river, that he would easily that day finish Sertza Denghel's life and reign.

The battle began with the most determined resolution and vigour on both sides. The Abyssinian foot drove back the Turkish infantry; and the king, dismounting from his horse, with his lance and shield in his hand, and charging at their head, animated them to preserve that advantage. On the other hand, the basha, who had soon put to flight part of the Abyssinian horse with whom he had engaged, fell furiously upon the foot commanded by the king, the Turks making a great carnage among them with their sabres; and the affair became but doubtful, when Robel, gentleman of the bed-chamber to the king, who commanded the pikemen on horseback, part of the king's household troops, seeing his master's danger, charged the Turkish horse where the basha was in person, and, clearing his way, broke his pike upon an officer of the basha who carried the standard immediately before him, and threw him dead at his feet.

Being without other arms, he then drew the short crooked knife, which the Abyssinians always carry in their girdle, and, pushing up his horse close, before the basha could recover from his surprise, he plunged it into his throat, so that he expired instantly. So unlooked-for a spectacle struck a panic into the troops. The Turkish horse first turned their backs, and a general rout followed.

The basha's body was carried upon a mule out of the field, and struck a terror into all the Mahometans wherever it passed. It no sooner entered Dobarwa than they were obliged to carry it out at the other end of the town. Sertza Denghel was not one that slumbered upon a victory. He entered Dobarwa sword in hand, putting all the Pagans and Mahometans that fell in his way to death; and, in this manner, pursued them to the frontiers of Masuah, leaving many to die for want of water in that desert.

The king, in honour of this brave action performed by Robel, ordered the following passage to be written in letters of gold, and inserted in the records of the kingdom: "Robel, servant to Sertza Denghel, and son to Menetcheli, slew a Turkish basha on horseback with a common knife."

Sertza Denghel, having thus delivered himself from the most formidable of his enemies, marched through Gojam again into Narea, extirpating, all the way he went, the Galla that obstructed his way to that state. He left an additional number of priests and monks to instruct them in the Christian religion; though there are some historians of this reign who pretend that it was not till this second visit that Narea was converted.

However this may be, victory had everywhere attended his steps; and he was now preparing to chastise the malecontents at Damot, when he was ac-

costed by a priest, famous for holiness, and a talent for divination, who warned him not to undertake that war. But the king, expressing his contempt of both the message and messenger, declared his fixed resolution to invade Damot without delay. The priest is said to have limited his advice still further, and to have begged him only to remember not to eat the fish of a certain river in the territory of Giba, in the province of Shat. The king, however, flushed with his victory over the Boren Galla, forgot the name of the river and the injunction; and, having ate fish out of it, was immediately after taken dangerously ill, and died on his return.

The writer of his life says, that the fatal effects of this river were afterwards experienced in the reign of Yasous the Great, at the time in which he wrote, when the king's whole army, encamped along the sides of this river, were taken with violent sickness after eating the fish caught in it, and that many of the soldiers died. Whether this be really fact or not, I will not take upon me to decide. Whether fish, or any other animal, living in water impregnated with poisonous minerals, can preserve its own life, and yet imbibe a quantity of poison sufficient to destroy the men that should eat it, seems to me very doubtful. Something like this is said to happen in oysters, which are found on copperas beds, or have preparations of copperas thrown upon them to tinge a part of them with green. I do not, however, think it likely, that the creature should live after this metallic dose, or preserve a taste, that would make it food for man, till he accumulated a quantity sufficient to destroy him.

Sertza Denghel was of a very humane affable disposition, very different from his father Menas. He was stedfast in his adherence to the church of Alex-

andria, and seemed perfectly indifferent as to the Romish church and clergy. In conversation, he frequently condemned their tenets, but always commended the sobriety and sanctity of their lives. He left no legitimate sons, but many daughters by his wife Mariam Sena; and two natural sons, Za Mariam and Jacob. He had also a nephew, called Za Denghel, son of his brother Lesana Christos.

It is absolutely contrary to truth, what is said by Tellez and others, that the illegitimate sons of the Negus have no right to succeed to the crown. There is, indeed, no sort of difference, as may be seen by many examples in the course of this history.

Sertza Denghel at first seemed to intend that his nephew, Za Denghel, should succeed him; a prince who had every good quality, was arrived at an age fit for governing, and had attended him and distinguished himself in great part of his wars. But, upon his death-bed, he changed his mind, probably at the instigation of the queen and the ambitious nobles, who desired to have the government in their own hands during a long minority. His son Jacob, a boy of seven years old, was now brought into court, and treated as heir-apparent, which every body thought was but natural and pardonable from the affection of a father.

At last, when he found his sickness would be mortal, the interest and love of his country seemed to overcome even the ties of blood. Calling his council together around his bed, he designed his successor in this last speech: "As I am sensible I am at the point of death, next to the care of my soul, I am anxious for the welfare of my kingdom. My first intention was to appoint Jacob, my son, to be successor; and I had done so unless for his youth, and it is probable neither you nor I could have cause to repent it. Con-

sidering, however, the state of my kingdom, I prefer its interest to the private affection I bear my son; and do, therefore, hereby appoint Za Denghel, my nephew, to succeed me, and be your king; and recommend him to you as fit for war, ripe in years, exemplary in the practice of every virtue, and as deserving of the crown by his good qualities, as he is by his near relation to the royal family." With these words the king expired in the end of August 1595, and was buried in the island Roma *.

* The reign of Melec Segued, though active, must be charged with the loss of Dawaro, Ifat, and Fatigar, and all the southern provinces. The Galla, under this prince, took possession of the fairest regions of the empire. No regular method was adopted to preserve the Mahometan districts, partly through fear of the Turks on the north-east frontier, and partly through revenge on the turbulent inhabitants. A race of inland barbarians therefore spread themselves all over the country south of the Nile, and without arms, or discipline, carried terror into the centre of the kingdom.—E.

ZA DENGHEL.

From 1595 to 1604.

Za Denghel dethroned—Jacob, a Minor, succeeds—Za Denghel is restored—Banishes Jacob to Narea—Converted to the Romish Religion—Battle of Bartcha, and Death of the King.

Sertza Denghel had several daughters, one of whom was married to Kefla Wahad, governor of the province of Tigrè, and another to Athanasius, governor of Amhara; the two most powerful men then in the kingdom. The empress and her two sons-in-law saw plainly, that the succession of Za Denghel, a man of ripe years, possessed of every requisite for reigning, was to exclude them from any share in the government but a subordinate one, for which they were to stand candidates on their own merits, in common with the rest of the nobility.

Immediately after the death of Sertza Denghel, and perhaps some time before it, a conspiracy was formed to change the order of succession. This was immediately executed by order of this triumvirate, who sent a body of soldiers and seized Za Denghel, and carried him close prisoner to Dek, a large island in the lake Tzana, belonging to the queen. There he was kept for some time, till he escaped and hid himself in the

wild inaccessible mountains of Gojam, which there form the banks of the Nile. They carried their precautions still further; and subsequent events strongly shewed, that these were well-grounded. They sent a party of men at the same time to surprise Socinios; but he, sufficiently upon his guard, no sooner saw the fate of his cousin, Za Denghel, than he withdrew himself in such a manner as shewed plainly he knew the value of his own pretensions, and was not to be an unconcerned spectator, if a revolution was to happen.

In order to understand perfectly the claims of those princes, who were by turns placed on the throne in the bloody war that followed, it will be necessary to know, that the emperor David III. had three sons. The eldest was Claudius, who succeeded him in the empire; the history of whose reign we have already given. The second was Jacob, who died a minor before his brother, but left two sons, Tascar and Facilidas. The third son was Menas, called Adamas Segued, who succeeded Claudius, his brother, in the empire; whose reigns we have given in their proper place.

Menas had four sons; Sertza Denghel, called Melec Segued, who succeeded his father in the empire, and whose history we have just now finished; the second, Aquieter; the third, Abatè; and the fourth, Lesano Christos; whose son was that Za Denghel, of whom we were last speaking, appointed to succeed to the throne by his uncle, when on his death-bed.

Tascar, the son of Jacob, died a minor. He rebelled against his uncle, Menas, in confederacy with the Baharnagash, as we have already seen; and his army being beat by his uncle and sovereign, he was, by his order, thrown over the steep precipice of Lamalmon, and dashed to pieces. Facilidas, the second remaining son of the same minor Jacob, lived many

years, possessed great estates in Gojam, and died afterwards in battle, fighting against the Galla, in defence of these possessions.

This Facilidas had a natural son, named Socinios, who inherited his father's possessions; was nephew to Sertza Denghel, and cousin-german to Za Denghel, appointed to succeed to the throne; so that Za Denghel being once removed, as Jacob had been postponed, there could be no doubt of Socinios's claim as the nearest heir-male to David III., commonly called Wanag Segued.

Socinios, from his infancy, had been trained to arms, and had undergone a number of hardships in his uncle's wars. Part of his estate had been seized, after his father's death, by men in power, favourites of Sertza Denghel; and he hoped for a complete restitution of them from Za Denghel, his cousin, when he should succeed; for these two were as much connected with each other by friendship and affection, as they were by blood. Nor would any step, says the historian, have ever been taken by Socinios towards mounting the throne, had Za Denghel, his cousin, succeeded, as by right he ought.

In the mean time, he was at the head of a considerable band of soldiers; had assisted Fasa Christos, governor of Gojam, in defeating the Galla, who had overrun that province; and, by his courage and conduct that day, had left a strong impression upon the minds of the troops, that he would soon become the most capable and active soldier of his time.

The queen and her two sons-in-law, being disappointed in their attempt upon Socinios, were obliged to take the only step that remained in their choice, which was, to appoint the infant Jacob king, a child

of seven years old *, and put him under the tutelage of Ras Athanasius.

The empress Mariam Sena, and her two sons-in-law, had gained to their party Za Selasse, a person of low birth, native of an obscure nation of Pagans, called Guraguè, a man esteemed for bravery and conduct, and beloved by the soldiers; but turbulent and seditious, without honour, gratitude, or regard, either to his word, to his sovereign, or the interests of his country.

Jacob had suffered patiently the direction of those that governed him, so long as the excuse of his minority was a good one. But being now arrived at the age of 17, he began to put in, by degrees, for his share in the direction of affairs; and observing some steps that tended to prolong the government of his tutors, by his own power he banished Za Selasse, the author of them, into the distant kingdom of Narea.

This vigorous proceeding alarmed the empress and her party. They saw that the measure taken by Jacob would presently lead all good men and lovers of their country to support him, and to annihilate their power They resolved not to wait till this took place, but instantly to restore Za Denghel, whom, with great difficulty, they found hid in the mountains between Gojam and Damot. And, to remove every suspicion in Za Denghel's breast, Ras Athanasius repaired to the palace, giving Jacob publicly, even on the throne, the most abusive and scurrilous language, calling him an obstinate, stubborn, foolish boy; declaring him degraded from being king, and announcing

* The name of the infant king seems to have been given as a nick-name in Abyssinia, and is preserved to this day.

to his face the coming of Za Denghel to supplant him. Jacob's behaviour on so unexpected an occasion was not such as Athanasius's rash speech led to expect. He gave a cool and mild reply to these invectives; but, finding himself entirely in his enemy's power, without losing a moment, he left his palace in the night, taking the road to Samen, not doubting of safety and protection if he could reach his mother's relations among those high rocky mountains.

Fortune at first seemed to favour his endeavours. He arrived at a small village immediately in the neighbourhood of the country to which he was going; but there he was discovered and made prisoner; carried back and delivered to Za Denghel, his rival, whom he found placed on his throne.

In all these cases, it is the invariable, though barbarous, practice of Abyssinia, to mutilate any such pretender to the throne, by cutting off his nose, ear, hand, or foot, as they shall be inclined the patient should die or live after the operation; it being an established law, that no person can succeed to the throne, as to the priesthood, without being perfect in all his limbs. Za Denghel, as he could not adopt so inhuman a procedure even with a rival, contented himself with only banishing Jacob to Narea.

Ever since that period of Menas's reign, when Samur, basha of Masuah, had been put in possession of Dobarwa, in virtue of a treaty with Isaac Baharnagash, then in rebellion, the Catholic religion was left destitute of all support; the fathers that had remained in Abyssinia being dead, and the entry into that kingdom shut up by the violent animosity of the Turks, and the cruelties they exercised upon all missionaries that fell into their hands. The few Catholics that remained were absolutely deprived of all assistance, when Melchior Sylvanus, an Indian vicar of the church

of St Anne at Goa, was pitched upon as a proper person to be sent to their relief. His language, colour, eastern air, and manner, seemed to promise that he would succeed, and baffle the vigilance of the Turks.

He arrived at Masuah in 1597, and entered Abyssinia unsuspected; but the power of the Turks being much lessened by the great defeat given them by Ser'za Denghel, who slew Cadward Basha, and retook Dobarwa and all its dependencies, as has been already mentioned, a very considerable part of their former dangers the missionaries might now hope to escape. But there still remained others, obstructing the communication with India, which, however, were surmountable, and gave way, as most of the kind do, to prudence, courage, and perseverance.

Accordingly, in the year 1600, Peter Paez, the most capable, as well as most successful missionary that ever entered Ethiopia, arrived at Masuah, after having suffered a long imprisonment, and many other hardships, on his way to that island; and, taking upon him the charge of the Portuguese, relieved Melchior Sylvanus, who returned to India.

Paez, however, did not press on to court as his predecessors, and even his successors, constantly did; but, confining himself to the convent of Fremona in Tigré, he first set himself, by invincible application, to attain the Geez, or written language, in which he arrived at a degree of knowledge superior to that of the natives themselves. He then applied to the instruction of youth, keeping a school, where he taught equally the children of the Portuguese and those of the Abyssinians. The great progress made by the scholars speedily spread abroad the reputation of the master. First of all, John Gabriel, one of the most distinguished officers of the Portuguese,

spoke of him in the warmest terms of commendation to Jacob, then upon the throne, who sent to Paez, and ordered his attendance as soon as the rainy season should be over.

In the month of April 1604, Peter, attended only by two of his young disciples, presented himself to the king, who then held his court at Dancaz. He was received with the same honours as are bestowed upon men of the first rank, to the great discontent of the Abyssinian monks, who easily foresaw that their humiliation would certainly follow this exaltation of Petros; nor were they mistaken. In a dispute held before the king next day, Peter produced the two boys, as more than sufficient to silence all the theologians in Abyssinia. Nor can it ever be doubted, by any who know the ignorance of these brutish priests, that the victory, in these scholastic disputes, would be fairly, easily, and completely on the side of the children.

Mass was then said according to the usage of the church of Rome, which was followed by a sermon (among the first ever preached in Abyssinia); but so far surpassing, in elegance and purity of diction, any thing yet extant in the learned language, Geez, that all the hearers began to look upon this as the first miracle on the part of the preacher.

Za Denghel was so taken with it, that, from that instant, he not only resolved to embrace the Catholic religion, but declared this his resolution to several friends, and soon after to Paez himself, under an oath of secrecy that he should conceal it for a time. This oath, prudently exacted from Peter, was, as imprudently, rendered useless by the zeal of the king himself, who, being of too sanguine a disposition to temporize after he was convinced, published a proclamation, forbidding the religious observation of Saturday,

or the Jewish Sabbath, for ever after. He likewise ordered letters to be wrote to the pope, Clement VIII. and to Philip III. king of Spain and Portugal, wherein he offered them his friendship, whilst he requested mechanics to assist, and Jesuits to instruct his people.

These sudden and violent measures were presently known; and every wretch that had, from other causes, the seeds of rebellion sown in his heart, began now to pretend they were only nourished there by a love and attachment to the true religion.

Many of the courtiers followed the king's example; some, as courtiers, for the sake of the king's favour, and meaning to adhere to the religion of Rome no longer than it was fashionable at court, promoted their interest, and exposed them to no danger; others, from their firm attachment to the king, the resolution to support him as their rightful sovereign, and a confidence in his superior judgment, and that he best knew what was most for the kingdom's advantage in its present distracted state, and for the confirmation of his own power, so intimately connected with the welfare of his people. Few, very few, it is believed, adopted the Catholic faith from that one discourse only, however pure the language, however eloquent the preacher. A hundred years and more had passed without convincing the Abyssinians in general, or without any material proof that they were prepared to be so.

However, the Jesuits have quoted an instance of this instantaneous conversion by the sermon, which, for their credit, I will not omit, though no notice is taken of it in the annals of those times, where it is not indeed to be expected, nor do I mean that it is less credible on this account.

An Abyssinian monk, of very advanced years, came forward to Peter Paez, and said, in a loud voice, before the king, "Although I have lived to a great age,

without a doubt of the Alexandrian faith, I bless God that he has spared me to this day, and thereby given me an opportunity of choosing a better. The things we knew before, you have so well explained, that they become still more intelligible; and we are thereby confirmed in our belief. Those things that were difficult, and which we could hardly understand, you have made so clear, that we now wonder at our own blindness in not having seen them plainly before. For these benefits, which I now confess to have received, I here make my declaration, that it is my stedfast purpose, with the assistance of Almighty God, to live and die in the faith you profess, and have now preached."

Among those of the court most attached to the king was Laeca Mariam, the inseparable companion of his good and bad fortune, who had followed his master from principles of duty and affection, without intending to waste any consideration upon what were likely to be the consequences to himself. He was reputed, in his character and abilities as a soldier, to be equal to Za Selasse, but very different, compared to him, in his qualities of civil life. He was sober in his general behaviour, sparing in discourse, and much readier to do a good office than to promise it; very affable and courteous in his manner, and of so humble and unassuming a deportment, that it was thought impossible to be real in a man, who had so often proved his superiority over others upon trial.

This man, a true royalist, was one of those that embraced the Catholic religion that day, probably following the example of the king; and this, in the hands of wicked men their enemies, very soon became a pretence for the murder of both. Za Selasse, impatient of a rival in any thing, more especially in military knowledge, began to hold seditious assemblies,

and especially with the monks, whom he taught to believe, what the king's conduct daily confirmed, that the Alexandrian faith was totally reprobated, and no religion would be tolerated but that of the church of Rome.

Gojam, a province always inveterate against the smallest inclination to the church of Rome, declared against the king; and, before he went to join his associates, the traitor, Za Selasse, in a conference he had with the Abuna Petros, proposed to him to absolve Za Denghel's subjects and soldiers from their oath of allegiance to their sovereign. The Abuna, a man of a very corrupt and bad life, a zealot in the cause, and an enemy to the king, was staggered at this proposal; not because it might do mischief, but because he doubted whether any such effect would follow it as Za Selasse hoped; and therefore he asked, what good he expected from such a novelty? When this traitor assured him, that it would be most efficacious for that very reason, because it was then first introduced; the Abuna forthwith absolved the soldiers and subjects of Za Denghel from their allegiance, declaring the king excommunicated and accursed, with all those that should support him, or favour his cause.

Though we are now writing the history of the 17th century, this was the first example of any priest excommunicating his sovereign in Abyssinia, except that of Honorius, who excommunicated Amda Sion for the repeated commission of incest*. And the doubt the zealot Abuna Petros had of its effect, as being a novelty, which fact the Jesuits themselves attest, shews it was a practice that had not its origin in the church of Alexandria. Neither had these curses of the Abuna any visible effect, till Za Selasse had put himself at the head of an army raised in Gojam. The king was

* This is doubtful.—E.

prepared to meet him, and ready to march from Dancaz.

Za Denghel immediately marched out into the plain of Bartcho, and in the way was deserted, first by Ras Athanasius, then by many of his troops. In this infidelity of the army, he found the first effects of the Abuna's curses; insomuch, that John Gabriel, a Portuguese officer of the first distinction, advised him to retire in time, and avoid a battle, by flying to strongholds for a season, till the present delusion among his subjects should cease. But the king, thinking himself dishonoured by avoiding the defiance of a rebel, resolved upon giving Za Selasse battle, who, being an able general, well knew the danger he would incur by delay.

On the 13th of October 1604, the king, after drawing up his army in order of battle, placing 200 Portuguese, with a number of Abyssinian troops, on the right, took to himself the charge of the left, and called for Peter Paez to give him absolution; but that Jesuit was occupied at a convenient distance in Tigré, in destroying, by his exorcisms, ants, butterflies, mice, locusts, and various other enemies, of much more importance, in his opinion, than the life of a king, whom he had blindly, but directly, conducted to slaughter by his fanatical preachings.

The engagement began with great appearance of success. On the right, the Portuguese, led by old and veteran officers, destroyed and overturned every thing before them with their fire-arms: but on the left, where the king commanded, things went otherwise; for the whole of this division fled, excepting a body of nobility, his own officers and companions, who remained with him, and fought manfully in his defence. Above all, the king himself, trained to a degree of excellence in the use of arms, strong and

agile in body, in the flower of his age, and an excellent horseman, performed feats of valour that seemed above the power of man: but he and his attendants being surrounded by the whole army of Selasse, and decreasing in number, were unable to support any longer such disadvantages.

Laeca Mariam, solicitous only for the king's safety, charging furiously every one that approached, was thrust through with a lance by a common soldier, who had approached him unobserved. The king, desirous only to avenge his death, threw himself like lightning into the opposite squadron, and received a stroke with a lance in the breast, which threw him from his horse on the ground. Grievous as the wound was, he instantly recovered himself, and, drawing his sword, continued to fight with as much vigour as ever. He was now hemmed in by a ring of soldiers, part of whom, afraid of encountering him, remained at a distance, throwing missile weapons, without good direction or strength, as if they had been hunting some fierce wild beast. Others, wishing to take him prisoner, abstained from striking him, out of regard to his character and dignity; but the traitor, Za Selasse, coming up at that instant, and seeing the king almost fainting with fatigue, and covered with wounds, pointed his lance, and spurring his horse, furiously struck him in the middle of the forehead. The blow threw the king senseless to the ground, where he was afterwards slain with many wounds.

The battle ended with the death of Za Denghel. Many saw him fall, and more his body after the defeat; but no one chose to be the first that should in any way dispose of it, or own that they knew it. It lay in this abject state for three days, till it was buried by some peasants in a corner of the plain, in a little building, like a chapel (which I have seen), not above

six feet high, under the shade of a very fine tree, in Abyssinia called sassa. Ten years after, Socinios removed it from that humble mausoleum, and buried it in a monastery called Daga, in the lake Dembea, with great pomp and magnificence*.

The grief which the death of Za Denghel occasioned was so universal, and the odium it brought upon the authors of it so great, that neither Za Selasse nor Ras Athanasius dared, for a time, to take one step towards naming a successor; which the fear of Za Denghel, and the uncertainty of victory, had prevented them from doing by common consent before the battle. There was no doubt but that the election would fall upon Jacob; but he was far off, confined in the mountainous country of Caffa, in Narea. The distance was great; the particular place uncertain; the way to it lay through deserts, always dangerous on account of the Galla, and often impassable.

* This account of the king's funeral is different from that found in the small MS. Chron. for which see the notes to the Chronological Table in Vol. VII.

JACOB.

From 1604 to 1605.

Makes Proposals to Socinios, which are rejected—Takes the Field—Bad Conduct and Defeat of Za Sclasse—Battle of Debra Zeit—Jacob defeated and slain.

During the interim, Socinios appeared in Amhara, not as one offering himself a candidate to be supported by the strength and interest of others, but like a conqueror, at the head of a small but well-disciplined army of veteran troops, ready to compel, by force, those who should refuse to swear allegiance to him from conviction of his right.

The first step he took was to send Bela Christos, a nobleman of known worth, to Ras Athanasius, then in Gojam; stating to him his pretensions to succeed Za Denghel in the kingdom, desiring his assistance with his army, and declaring that he would acknowledge the service done him as soon as it was in his power. Without waiting for an answer, at the head of his little army he passed the Nile, and entered Gojam. He then sent a second message to Ras Athanasius, acquainting him that he was at hand, and ordering him to prepare to receive his sovereign.

This abrupt and confident conduct of Socinios very much disconcerted Ras Athanasius. He had as yet

concerted nothing with his friend Za Selasse, and it was now too late to do it. There was no person then within the bounds of the empire that solicited the crown but Socinios, and he was now at hand, and very much favoured by the army. For these reasons, he thought it best to put a good face upon the matter in his present situation. He therefore met Socinios as required, and joined his army, as if it had been his free choice, and saluted him king in the midst of repeated cheerful congratulations of both armies, now united.

Having succeeded in this to his wish, Socinios lost no time to try the same experiment with Za Selasse, who was then in Dembea, the province of which he was governor. To him he sent this message, "That God, by his grace, having called him to the throne of his ancestors, he was now on his march to Dembea, where he requested him to prepare his troops to receive him, and dispose them to deserve the favours that he was ready to confer upon all of them." Za Selasse remained for a while as if thunderstruck by so peremptory an intimation. Of all masters, he wished most eagerly for Jacob; because, from experience, he thought he could govern him. Of all masters, he most feared Socinios; because he knew he possessed capacity and qualities that would naturally determine him to govern alone. After having concerted with his friends, he sent Socinios answer, "That not having till now known any thing of his claims or intentions, he had sent an invitation to Jacob, into Narea, whose answer he expected; but that, in case Jacob did not appear, he then would receive Socinios with every mark of duty and affection; and hoped he would grant him the short delay, to which he had inadvertently, though innocently, engaged himself."

This answer did in no shape please Socinios; who dispatched the messenger immediately with this declaration, "That he was already king, and would never cede his right to Jacob, who was deposed, and judged unworthy to reign; no, nor even to his father Melac Segued, though he should rise again from the grave, and claim the throne he had so long sat upon."

Za Selasse, easily penetrating that there was no peace in the intentions of Socinios, first imprisoned the messenger; and, instead of another answer, marched instantly with his whole army to surprise him before he had time to take his measures. And in this he succeeded. For Socinios being at that instant overtaken by sickness, and not knowing what trust to put in Athanasius's army, retired in haste to the mountains of Amhara; while Athanasius also withdrew his troops, till he should know upon what terms he stood both with Za Selasse and the king.

Still no return came from Jacob. The winter was nearly past, and not only the soldiers, but people of all ranks, began to weary of this interregnum, and heartily wished for their ancient form of government. They said, that, since Jacob did not appear, there could be no reason for excluding Socinios, whose title was undoubted, and who had all the qualities necessary to make a good king.

Za Selasse, seeing this opinion gained ground among his troops, and fearing they might mutiny and leave him alone, made a virtue of necessity: he dispatched an ambassador to acknowledge Socinios as his sovereign, and declare that he was ready to swear allegiance to him. Socinios received this embassy with great apparent complacency. He sent in return a monk, in whom he confided, a person of great worth and dignity, to be his representative, and receive the homage of Za Selasse and his army. On the news of

this monk's approach, Za Selasse sent, on his part, ten men, the most respectable in his camp, to meet this representative of the king, and conduct him into the camp, where Za Selasse, and all his troops, did homage, and swore allegiance to Socinios. Feasts and presents were now given in the camp, as is usual at the accession of a new king to the throne, and all the army abandoned themselves to joy.

These good tidings were immediately communicated both to Socinios and Ras Athanasius. But, in the midst of this rejoicing, a messenger came from Jacob, informing Za Selasse that he was then in Dembea; that he had conferred on him the title of Ras and Betwudet, that is, his lieutenant-general throughout the whole empire. Za Selasse, in possession of the heights of his wishes, and making am ample distribution among his troops, determined immediately to march and join Jacob in Dembea; but first he wrote privately to the ten men that had accompanied the monk to Socinios, that they should withdraw themselves as suddenly and privately as possible, before the coming of Jacob was known. Eight of these were lucky enough to do so; two of them were overtaken in the flight, and brought back to Socinios, who ordered them to be executed immediately.

Ras Athanasius, seeing the prosperous turn that Jacob's affairs had taken, renounced his oath to Socinios, and repaired to Jacob at Coga, while Socinios retired into Amhara at the head of a very respectable army, waiting an opportunity to repay Jacob for his ambition, and Athanasius and Za Selasse for their treason and perjury towards him.

Although Jacob was now again seated on the throne, surrounded by the army and great officers of the empire, his mind was always disturbed with the apprehension of Socinios. In order to free himself from

this anxiety, he employed Socinios's mother in an application to her son, with an offer of peace and friendship; promising, besides, that he would give him in property the kingdoms of Amhara, Walaka, and Shoa, and all the lands which his father had ever possessed in any other part of Abyssinia. Socinios shortly answered, "That what God had given him no man could take from him; that the whole kingdom belonged to him, nor would he ever relinquish any part of it but with his life. He advised Jacob to consider this, and peaceably resign a crown which did not belong to him; and the attempting to keep which would involve him and his country in a speedy destruction."

Upon this defiance, seeing Socinios implacable, Jacob took the field, and was followed by Za Selasse. But this proud and insolent traitor, who never could confine himself within the line of his duty, even under a king of his own choice, would not join his forces with Jacob, but vain-gloriously led a separate army, subject to his orders alone. In this manner, having separate camps, on different ground, and sometimes at a considerable distance from each other, they came up with Socinios in Begemder. Jacob advanced so near him, that his tent could be distinctly seen from that of Socinios, and, on the morrow, Jacob and Za Selasse, drawing up their armies, offered him battle.

That wise prince saw too well that he was overmatched, and, though he desired a battle as much as Jacob, it was not upon such terms as the present. He declined it, and kept hovering about them, as near as possible, on the heights and uneven ground, where he could not be forced to fight till it perfectly suited his own interest.

This refusal on the part of Socinios only increased Za Selasse's pride. He despised Jacob as a general, and thought that Socinios' declining battle was owing

only to the apprehension he had of his presence, courage, and abilities. He continued parading with the separate army, perfectly intoxicated with confidence and an imaginary superiority, neglecting all the wholesome rules of war rigidly adhered to by great generals for the sake of discipline, however distant they may be from their enemy.

It was not long before this was told Socinios, who soon saw his advantage in it, and thereupon resolved to fight Za Selasse singly, and watch attentively till he should find him as far as possible from Jacob. Nor did he long wait for the occasion; for Za Selasse, attempting to lead his army through very uneven and stoney ground, called the Pass of Mount Defer, and at a considerable distance from Jacob, Socinios attacked him while in the pass so rudely, that his army, entangled in broken and unknown ground, was surrounded and almost cut to pieces. Za Selasse, with a few followers, saved themselves by the goodness of their horses, and joined the king, being the first messengers of their own defeat.

Jacob received the news of this misfortune without any apparent concern. On the contrary, he took Za Selasse roundly to task for having lost such an army by his misconduct; and from that time put on a coolness of carriage towards him that could not be suffered by such a character. He made direct proposals to Socinios to join him, if he could be assured that his services would be well received. Socinios, though he reposed no confidence in one that had changed sides so often, was yet, for his own sake, desirous to deprive his rival of an officer of such credit and reputation with the soldiers. He therefore promised him a favourable reception; and, a treaty being concluded, Socinios marched into Gojam, followed by Jacob, and

there was joined by Za Selasse, whom Jacob had made governor of that province.

Jacob, not knowing how far this desertion might extend, and to shew Socinios the little value he set upon his new acquisition, immediately advanced towards him, and offered him battle. This was what Socinios very earnestly wished for; but, as his army was much inferior to Jacob's, he seemed to decline it from motives of fear, till he had found ground proper for his army to engage in with advantage.

Jacob, sensible of the great superiority he had (historians say it was nearly thirty to one), grew every day more impatient to bring Socinios to an engagement, fearing he might retreat, and thereby prolong the war, which he had no doubt would be finished by the first action. Therefore he was anxious to keep him always in sight, without regarding the ground through which his eagerness led him. Several days the two armies marched side by side in sight of each other, till they came to Debra Tzait, or the mountain of Olives. There Jacob halted; he then advanced a little further, and seeing Socinios encamped, did the same, in a low and very disadvantageous post on the banks of the river Lebart.

Socinios, having now obtained his desire, early in the morning of the 10th of March, 1607, fell suddenly upon Jacob, cooped up in a low and narrow place, which gave him no opportunity of availing himself of his numbers. Jacob soon found that he was overreached by the superior generalship of his enemy. Socinios's troops were so strongly posted, that Jacob's soldiers found themselves in a number of ambushes they had not foreseen; so that, fighting or flying being equally dangerous to them, his whole army was nearly destroyed in the field, or in the flight, which

was most ardently and vigorously followed till night, with little loss on the part of Socinios.

This battle, decisive enough by the rout and dispersion of the enemy, became still more so from two circumstances attending it: The first was the death of his competitor, who fell unknown among a herd of common soldiers in the beginning of the action, without having performed, in his own person, any thing worthy of the character he had to sustain, or that could enable a spectator to give an account in what place he fell; the consequence of which was, that he was believed to be alive many years afterwards. The second was the death of the Abuna Petros. This priest had distinguished himself in Za Denghel's reign, by absolving the king's subjects and soldiers from their oaths of allegiance, which was followed by the unfortunate death of Za Denghel in the plain of Bartcho. Vain of the importance he had acquired by the success of his treason, he had pursued the same conduct with regard to Socinios, and followed Jacob to battle, where, trusting to his character and habit for the safety of his person, he neglected the danger that he ran amidst a flying army. While occupied in uttering vain curses and excommunications against the conquerors, he was known, by the crucifix he held in his hand, by a Moorish soldier of Socinios, who thrust him through with a lance, then cut his head off, and carried it to the king.

The Abyssinian annals state, that, immediately after seeing the head of Abuna Peter, Socinios ordered a retreat to be sounded, and that no more of his enemies should be slain. On the contrary, the Jesuits have said, that the pursuit was continued even after night; for that a body of horse, among whom were many Portuguese belonging to the army of Jacob, flying from Socinios's troops, fell over a very high precipice, it being so dark that they did not discover it;

and that one soldier called Manuel Gonsalez, finding his horse leave him, as it were flying, lighted luckily on a tree, where, in the utmost trepidation, he sat all night, not knowing where he was. This fear was greatly increased in the morning, when he beheld the horses, and the men, who were his companions, lying dead, and dashed to pieces in the plain below.

Ras Athanasius, who had followed the party of Jacob, narrowly escaped by the swiftness of his horse, and hid himself in the monastery of Dima, at no great distance from the field of battle; and Peter Paez, from remembrance of his former good offices, having recommended him to Sela Christos, Socinios's brother-in-law, he was pardoned; but losing favour every day, his effects and lands having been taken from him on different occasions, he is said at last to have died for want, justly despised by all men for unsteadiness in allegiance to his sovereigns, by which he had been the occasion of the death of two excellent princes, had frequently endangered the life and state of the third, and had been the means of the slaughter of many thousands of their subjects, worthier men than himself, as they fell in the discharge of their duty. But before his death he had still this further mortification, that his wife, daughter of Sertza Denghel, called Melec Segued, voluntarily forsook his bed, and retired to a single life.

SOCINIOS, OR SULTAN SEGUED*.

From 1605 to 1632.

Socinios embraces the Romish Religion—War with Senaar—With the Shepherds—Violent Conduct of the Romish Patriarch—Lasta Rebels—Defeated at Wainadega—Socinios restores the Alexandrian Religion—Resigns his Crown to his eldest Son.

SOCINIOS, now universally acknowledged as king, began his reign with a degree of moderation which there was no reason to expect of him. Often as he had been betrayed, many and inveterate as his enemies were, now he had them in his power, he sought no vengeance for injuries which he had suffered, but

* The history of the reign of Susneus begins the third volume of the Abyssinian annals, brought from Gondar by Mr Bruce. It is one of the best written in the collection, and evidently a transcript, if not the original, of the annals written by the royal historiographer. It consists of ninety-nine kefel, or chapters, on seventy-five leaves of thin vellum, of the size before mentioned. The character is smaller and neater than that of the modern scribes. Many passages have been erased, and amended; it has the appearance of having been much used. The style of it is less inflated than that of the other chronicles. The information it contains is minute, extensive, and various; with a greater portion of candour, on the subject of the Romish faith, than is

freely pardoned every one, receiving all men graciously without reproach or reflections, or even depriving them of their employments.

Being informed, however, that one Mahardin, a Moor, had been the first to break through that respect due to a king, by wounding Za Denghel at the battle of Bartcho, he ordered him to be brought at noon-day before the gate of his palace, and his head to be there struck off with an axe, as a just atonement for violated majesty.

The king, now retiring to Coga, gave his whole attention to regulate those abuses, and repair those losses, which this long and bloody war had occasioned. He had two brothers by the mother's side, men of great merit, Sela Christos, and Emana Christos, destined to share a principal part in his confidence and councils, during the whole of a spirited but troublesome reign.

Bela Christos, a man of great family, who had been attached to him since he formed his first pretensions to the crown, was called to court to take his share in the glory and dangers of this reign, which it was easy to see would be a very active one; for every province around was full of rebels and independents, who had shaken off the yoke of government, paid no taxes, nor shewed any more respect to the king than consisted with their own interest or inclination.

The Portuguese soldiers, remnants of the army which came into Abyssinia under Christopher de Ga-

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usually found in these histories. After it comes the long reign of Facilidas, contracted into two leaves; for the larger annals seem to be lost, and only the epitome preserved. Then the reign of Hannes, or John I., with a prolix monthly detail of all his obscure expeditions, occupies thirty one leaves more, and completes the volume, which consists of two hundred and eight folia, the history of seventy-six years. The MS. was presented to Mr Bruce by Tecla Haimanout II. king of Abyssinia.—E.

ma, had multiplied exceedingly, and their children had been trained by their parents in the use of fire-arms. They were at this time incorporated in one body, under John Gabriel, a veteran officer, who seems to have constantly remained with the king, while his soldiers (at least great part of them) had followed the fortune they thought most likely to prevail, ever since the time of Claudius.

Menas did not esteem them enough to keep them in his army at the expence of enduring the seditious conversations of their priests, reviling and undervaluing his religion and government. He therefore banished them the kingdom; but, instead of obeying, they joined the Baharnagash, then confederated with the Turks and in rebellion against his sovereign, as we have already mentioned. Sertza Denghel seems to have scarcely set any value upon them after this, and made very little use of them during his long reign. Upon the infant Jacob's being put upon the throne, they all adhered to him; and, after Jacob's banishment, part of them had attached themselves to Za Denghel, and behaved with great spirit in the battle of Bartcho.

Upon Jacob's restoration they had joined him, and with him were defeated at the decisive battle of Lebart, being all united against Socinios; so that, on whatever side they declared themselves, they were constantly beaten, by the cowardice of the Abyssinians with whom they were joined. Yet, though they had been so often on the side that was unfortunate, their particular loss had been always inconsiderable; because, whatever was the fate of the rest of the army, none of the country troops would ever stand before them, and they made their retreat from amidst a routed army in nearly the same safety as if they had been conquerors; because it was not, for several rea-

sons, the interest of the conquerors to attack them, nor was the experiment ever likely to be an eligible one to the assailants.

Socinios followed a conduct opposite to that of Menas. He determined to attach the Portuguese wholly to himself, and to make them depend upon him entirely. For this reason he made great advances to their priests, and sent for Peter Paez to court, where, after the usual disputes upon the pope's supremacy, and the two natures in Christ, mass was said, and a sermon preached, with much the same success as it had been in the time of Za Denghel, and with full as great offence to the Abyssinian clergy.

The province of Dembea, lying round the lake Tzana, is the most fertile and cultivated country in Abyssinia. It is entirely flat, and seems to have been produced by the decrease of water in the lake, which, from very visible marks, appears to have been formerly of four times the extent of what it is at present. Dembea, however fruitful, has one inconvenience, to which all level countries in this climate are subject: A mortal fever rages in the whole extent of it, from March to Heder St Michael, the 8th day of November, when there are always gentle showers. This dangerous fever stops immediately upon the falling of these rains, as suddenly as the plague does upon the first falling of the nucta, or dew, in Egypt.

On the north side of this lake the country rises into a rocky promontory, which forms a peninsula, and runs far into the lake. Nothing can be more beautiful than this small territory, elevated, but not to an inconvenient height, above the water which surrounds it on all sides, except on the north. The climate is delightful, and no fevers or other diseases rage here. The prospect of the lake and distant mountains is magnificent beyond European conception; and Na-

ture seems to have pointed this place out for pleasure, health, and retirement. Paez had asked and obtained this territory from the king, who, he says, gave him a grant of it in perpetuity. The manner of this he describes: "A civil officer is sent on the part of the king, who calls together all the proprietors of the neighbouring lands, and visits the bounds with them; they kill a goat at particular distances, and bury the heads under ground upon the boundary line of this regality; which heads, Paez says, it is felony to dig up or remove; and this is a mark or gift of land in perpetuity."

Without contradicting the form of burying the goats heads, I shall only say, I never saw or heard of it; nor is there such a thing as a gift of land *in perpetuum* known in Abyssinia. All the land is the king's; he gives it to whom he pleases during pleasure, and resumes it when it is his will. As soon as he dies, the whole land in the kingdom (that of the Abuna excepted) is in the disposal of the crown; and not only so, but, by the death of every present owner, his possessions, however long enjoyed, revert to the king, and do not fall to the eldest son. It is by proclamation the possession and property is reconveyed to the heir, who thereby becomes absolute master of the land for his own life, or pleasure of the king, under obligation of military and other services; and that exception, on the part of the Abuna, is not in respect to the sanctity of his person, or charge, but because it is founded upon treaty *, and is become part of the constitution.

The Abyssinians saw, with the utmost astonishment, the erection of a convent, strongly built with stone and lime, of which before they had no knowledge;

* We have mentioned this treaty in the reign of Icon Amlac.

and their wonder was still increased, when, at desire of the king, Paez undertook, of the same materials, to build a palace for him at the southmost end of this peninsula, which is called Gorgora. It was with amazement, mixed with terror, that they saw house rise upon house; for so they call the different storeys.

Paez here displayed his whole ingenuity, and the extent of his abilities. He alone was architect, mason, smith, and carpenter; and with equal dexterity managed all the instruments used by each profession in the several stages of the work. The palace was what we shall call wainscotted with cedar, divided into state-rooms, and private apartments likewise for the queen and nobility of both sexes that formed the court, with accommodations and lodgings for guards and servants *.

As the king had at that time a view to attack the rebels, the Agows and Damots, and to check the inroads of the Galla into Gojam, he saw with pleasure a work going on, that provided the most commodious residence where his occupation in all probability was chiefly to lie. His principal aim was to bring into his kingdom a number of Portuguese troops, which, joined to those already there, and the converts he proposed to make after embracing the Catholic religion, might enable him to extirpate that rebellious spirit which seemed now universally to have taken possession of the hearts of his subjects, and especially of the clergy, of late taught, he did not seem to know how, that most dangerous privilege of cursing and excommunicating kings. He had not seen in Peter Paez and his fellow-priests any thing but submission, and a love of monarchy; their lives and manners were tru-

* A long account of this palace is given in the MS. The builder is called Padre Pai.—E.

ly apostolical; and he never thought, till he came afterwards to be convinced upon proof, that the patriarch from Rome, and the Abuna from Cairo, though they differed in their opinion as to the two natures in Christ, did both heartily agree in the desire of erecting ecclesiastical dominion and tyranny upon the ruins of monarchy and civil power, and of effecting a total subordination of the civil government, either to the chairs of St Mark or St Peter.

In the winter, during the cessation from work, Socinios called Paez from Gorgora to Goga, where he enlarged the territory the Jesuits then had at Fremona. After which he declared to him his resolution to embrace the Catholic religion; and, as Paez says, presented him with two letters, one to the king of Portugal, the other to the pope: the first dated the 10th of December 1607, the latter the 14th of October of the same year. These letters say not a word of his intended conversion, nor of submission to the see of Rome; but complain only of the disorderly state of his kingdom, and the constant inroads of the Galla, earnestly requesting a number of Portuguese soldiers to free them from their yoke, as formerly, under the conduct of Christopher de Gama, they had delivered Abyssinia from that of the Moors.

While these things passed at Coga, two pieces of intelligence, were brought to the king, both very material in themselves, but which affected him very differently. The first was, that the traitor Za Selasse, while making one of his incursions into Gojam, had fallen into an ambush laid for him by the Toluma Galla, guardians of that province on the banks of the Nile, and that these Pagans had slain him and cut off his head, which they then presented to the king, who ordered it to be exposed on the lance whereon it was

fixed, in the most conspicous place in the front of his palace.

This was the end of Ras Za Selasse, a name held in detestation to this day throughout all Abyssinian. Though his death was just as it ought to have been, yet, as it was in an advanced time of life, he still became a hurtful example, by shewing that it was possible for a man to live to old age in the continual practice of murder and treason.

He was of low birth, as I have already observed, of a Pagan nation of Troglodytes, of the lowest esteem in Abyssinia, employed always in the meanest and most servile occupation, in which capacity he served first in a private family. Being observed to have an active, quick turn of mind, he was preferred to the service of Melec Segued, upon whose death he was so much esteemed by his son Jacob, for the expertness and capacity he shewed in business, that he gave him large possessions, and appointed him afterwards to several ranks in the army; having regularly advanced through the subordinate degrees of military command, always with great success, he was made at last general; and being now of importance sufficient to be able to ruin his benefactor, he joined Ras Athanasius, who had rebelled against Jacob, by whom he was taken prisoner, and, being mercifully dealt with, only banished to Narea. From this disgraceful situation he was freed by Za Denghel, who conferred upon him the most lucrative and important employment in the state. In return, he rebelled against Za Denghel; and at Bartcho deprived him of his kingdom and life. Upon Jacob's accession he was appointed Betwudet, the first place in Ethiopia, after the king, and governor of Gojam, one of the largest and richest provinces in Abyssinia. But he soon after again forsook Jacob, swore allegiance to Socinios, and joined him.

Not content with all this, he began to form some new designs while with the court at Coga; and, having said to some of the king's servants, over wine, that it was prophesied to him he should kill three kings, which he had verified in two, and was waiting for the third, this speech was reported to Socinios, who ordered Za Selasse to be apprehended; and, though he most justly deserved death, the king mercifully commuted his punishment to banishment to the top of Ouree Amba, which signifies the Great Mountain, upon the high ridge called Gusman, near the banks of the Nile; and, though close confined in the caves on the top of that mountain, after a year's imprisonment he escaped to Walaka, and there declared himself captain of a band of robbers, with which he infested the province of Gojam, when he was slain by a peasant, and his head cut off and sent to Socinios, who very much rejoiced in the present, and disposed of it as we have mentioned.

The second piece of intelligence the emperor received was, that, in the mountains of Habab, contiguous to Masuah, where is the famous monastery of the monks of St Eustathius, called Bisan, a person had appeared, calling himself Jacob, son of Sertza Denghel, and pretending to have escaped from the battle of Lebart. Taking advantage of the circumstance of Jacob's body not having been found in the field among the dead after that engagement, he pretended he had been so grievously wounded in the teeth and face, that it was not possible to suffer the deformity to appear; for which reason, as he said, but, as it appeared afterwards, to conceal the little resemblance he bore to Jacob, he wrapped about his head the corner of his upper cloth, and so concealed one side of his face entirely.

All Tigré hastened to join this impostor as their true sovereign; who, finding himself now at the head of an army, came down from the mountains of Bisan, and encamped in the neighbourhood of Dobarwa upon the Mareb, where he had a new accession of strength.

The shape of the crown in Abyssinia is that of the hood, or cape, which the priests wear when saying mass. It is composed of silver, sometimes of gold, sometimes of both metals, mixed and lined with blue silk. It is made to cover part of the forehead, both cheeks, and the hind-part of the neck likewise to the joining of the shoulders. A crown of this shape could not but be of great service in hiding the terrible scars with which the impostor's face was supposed to be deformed. He had accordingly got one made at Masuah, beat very thin out of a few ounces of gold, which he had taken from a caravan that he had robbed. He wore it constantly upon his head, as a token that he was not a candidate for the crown, but real sovereign, who had worn that mark of power from his infancy.

The news of this impostor, with the usual exaggeration of followers, soon came to Sela Christos, governor of Tigré, who, seeing that the affair became more serious every day, resolved to attempt to check it. He conceived, however, he had little trust to put in the troops of his province, who all of them were wavering whether they should not join the rebel. His sole dependence, then, was upon the troops of his own household, veteran soldiers, well paid and cloathed, and firmly attached to his person, and likewise upon the Portuguese. Above all, being himself a man of consummate courage and prudence, he was far from judging of the power of his enemy by the multitude of rabble which composed it.

As soon as the armies came in presence of each other, Jacob offered the governor battle. But no sooner did the impostor's troops see the eagerness with which the small but chosen band rushed upon them, than they fled and dispersed; and though Sela Christos had taken every precaution to cut off the pretended Jacob from his usual skulking-places, it was not possible to overtake or apprehend him. He arrived in safety at one of the highest and most inaccessible mountains of the district, whence he looked down on Sela Christos and his army without apprehension, having behind him a retreat to the more distant and less known mountains of Hamazen, should his enemies have pressed him further.

As long as Sela Christos remained with his little army in that country, the impostor Jacob continued on the highest part of the mountains, accompanied only by two or three of his most intimate friends, who, being people whose families dwelt in the plain below, brought him constant intelligence of what passed there.

Sela Christos, wishing by all means to engage the enemy, marched into a considerable plain, called Maiaquel; but, seeing on every side the top of each mountain guarded by troops of soldiers, he was afraid he had advanced too far; and apprehensive lest he should be inclosed in the midst of a multitude so posted, he began to think how he could best make his retreat, before he was surrounded by so numerous enemies. But they no sooner saw his intention by the movement of his army, than, leaving their leader as a spectator above, they fell on all sides upon Sela Christos's troops, who, having no longer any safety but in their arms, began to attack the hill that was next them, which they stormed as they would do a castle. Finding the small resistance that each of these posts made, the governor divided his small army into

as many separate bodies, leaving his cavalry in the plain below, who, without fighting, were only employed in slaughtering those his troops had dislodged from their separate posts.

The day after, the impostor, assembling his scattered troops, retreated towards the sea into the territory of Hamazen, between the country of the Baharnagash and the mountains of the Habab.

Sela Christos, finding that, while he pursued his victory in these distant parts, the spirit of rebellion increased nearer home, resolved to inform the king his brother of the unpromising state of his affairs in Tigré, and the great necessity there was of his presence there. Nor did Socinios lose a moment after receiving this intelligence from Sela Christos, although it had found him, in one respect, very ill prepared for such an undertaking; for he had sent all his horse from Coga upon an expedition against the Shangalla and Gongas, nations on the north-west border of this kingdom; so that, when he marched from Wainadega, his cavalry amounted to 530 men only, besides a small reinforcement brought by Emana Christos, governor of Amhara.

It was at Aibo the king turned off the road to Tigré towards Begemder, and that day encamped at Wainadega. From Wainadega he advanced to Davada; and, crossing the Reb, he turned off by the way of Zang, and encamped at Kattame. He then proceeded to Tzame, and arrived at Hader. At this place some spies informed him that an advanced party of the Galla Marawa were strongly lodged in a hill not far off. Upon receiving this notice, Socinios ordered his army to refresh themselves, to extinguish all lights, and march with as little noise as possible.

While it was scarce dawn of day, a strong detachment of the king's army surrounded the hill where the Galla were, and found there a small

number of these savages placed like piquets to give the alarm and prevent surprise. Eleven Galla were slain, and their heads cut off and carried to the king, the first fruits of his expedition.

Resolving to profit by this early advantage, Socinios followed with all diligence, and came in sight of the army of the enemy, without their having taken the smallest alarm. They were lying closely and securely in huts that they had made. A large ravine, full of trees and stumps, divided the two armies, and in part concealed them from each other. The king ordered Emana Christos, and Abeton Welleta Christos, to pass the ravine with the horse, and fall upon the Galla suddenly, throwing the heads of those of the advanced guard they had cut off, on the ground towards them.

Before the king's horse had passed the ravine, the Galla were alarmed, and mounted on horseback. As they never fight in order, it required no time to form; but they received the king's cavalry so rudely, that, though Emana Christos and the young prince behaved with the utmost courage, they were beat back, and obliged to fly with considerable loss, being entangled in the bushes. No sooner did the king observe that his horse were engaged, than he ordered his troops to pass the ravine to support them, and was desirous to bring on a general engagement. But a panic had seized his troops. They would not stir, but seemed benumbed and overcome by the cold of the morning, spectators of the ruin of the cavalry.

Emana Christos, and those of the cavalry that had escaped the massacre, had repassed the ravine, and dispersed themselves in the front of the foot; while the victorious Marawa, like ignorant savages, pushed their victory to the very front of the king's line, Socinios, ordering all the drums of the army to beat,

and trumpets to sound, to excite some spirit in his troops, advanced himself before any of the soldiers, and slew the first Galla within his reach with his own hand. The example and danger the king exposed himself to, raised the indignation of the troops. They poured in crowds, without regarding order, upon the Marawa, great part of whom had already passed the ravine, and all that had passed it were cut to pieces.

The Galla, unable to stand this loss, fled from the field, and immediately after left Begemder. The want of horse on the king's part saved their whole army from the destruction which would infallibly have been the consequence of a vigorous pursuit, through a country where every inhabitant was an enemy. The king after this returned to his palace at Coga to finish the business he had in hand.

In the mean time, a report was spread through all Tigré, that the king had been defeated by the Galla, and that Ras Sela Christos had repaired to Gondar in consequence of that disaster. The impostor Jacob lost no time in taking advantage of this report. He descended from his natural fortress, and, in conjunction with the governor of Axum, slew several people, and committed many ravages in Sire. The Ras no sooner learned that he was encamped on plain ground, than he presented himself with the little army he had before; and, though the odds against him were excessive, yet, by his presence and conduct, the rebels, though they fought this time with more than ordinary obstinacy, were defeated with great loss, and their leader, the supposed Jacob, forced again to his inaccessible mountains.

Socinios having now finished the affairs which detained him at Coga, and being informed that the southern Galla, resenting the defeat of the Marawa, had entered into a league to invade Abyssinia with

united forces, and a complete army, to burn and lay waste the whole country between the Tacazze and Tzana, and to attack the emperor in his capital of Coga, which they were determined to destroy, sent orders to Kasmati Julius, his son-in-law, to join him immediately with what forces he had, as also to Kefla Christos; and, being joined by both these officers and their troops, he marched and took post at Ebenaat in the district of Belessen, in the way by which the Galla intended to pass to the capital, and he resolved to await them there.

The Galla advanced in their usual manner, burning and destroying churches and villages, and murdering without mercy all that were so unfortunate as to fall into their hands. The king bore those excesses of the enemy with the patience of a good general, who saw they contributed to his advantage. He therefore did not offer to check any of their disorders, but, by not resisting, rather seemed to encourage them. He had an army superior in number, and this was seldom the case; but in quality there was no comparison, five of the king's troops being equal to twenty of the enemy, and this was the general proportion in which they fought. He therefore contented himself with choosing proper ground to engage, and improving it by ambushes, such as the nature of the field permitted, or suggested.

On the 17th of January, 1608, early in the morning, the Galla presented themselves to Socinios in battle, in a plain below Ebenaat, surrounded with small hills covered with wood. The Galla filled the whole plain, as if voluntarily devoting themselves to destruction, and from the hills and bushes were destroyed by fire-arms from enemies they did not see, who with a strong body took possession of the place through which they entered, and by which they were to return no more.

Socinios that day, for what particular reason does not appear, distinguished himself among the midst of the Galla, by fighting like a common soldier. It is thought by the historians of those time, that he had received advice while at Coga, that his son-in-law, Julius, intended to rebel, and therefore he meant to discourage him by comparison of their personal abilities. This, however, is not probable; the king's character was established, and nothing more could be added to it. However that may be, all turned to the disadvantage of the Galla. No general, or other officer, thought himself entitled to spare his person more than the king; all fought like common soldiers; and, being the men best armed and mounted, and most experienced in the field, they contributed in proportion to the slaughter of the day. About 12,000 men on the part of the Galla were killed upon the spot; the very few that remained were destroyed by the peasants, whilst 400 men only fell on the part of the king; so it was a massacre rather than a battle.

Socinios now resolved to try his fortune against the impostor Jacob; and with that resolution he crossed Lamalmon, descending to the Tacazze, in his way to Sire. Here, as on the frontiers of his province, he was met by Sela Christos, who brought Peter Paez along with them. Both were kindly received by the king, who encamped in the large plain before Axum, in consequence of a resolution he had long taken of being crowned with all the ancient ceremonies used on this occasion by the former kings, while the royal residence was in the province of Tigré.

It was on the 18th of March, according to their account, the day of our Saviour's first coming to Jerusalem, that this festival began. His army consisted of about 30,000 men. All the great officers, all the officers of state, and the court then present, were dressed in the richest and gayest manner. Nor was

the other sex behind in the splendour of their appearance. The king, dressed in crimson damask, with a great chain of gold round his neck, his head bare, mounted upon a horse richly caparisoned, advanced at the head of the nobility, passed the outer-court, and came to the paved way before the church. Here he was met by a number of young girls, daughters of the umbares, or supreme judges, together with many noble virgins standing on the right and left of the court.

Two of the noblest of these held in their hands a crimson cord of silk, somewhat thicker than a common whip-cord, but of a looser texture, stretched across from one company to another, as if to shut up the road by which the king was approaching the church. When this cord was prepared and drawn tight about breast-high by the girls, the king entered, advancing at a moderate pace, curvetting and shewing the management of his horse. He was stopped by the tension of this string, while the damsels on each side asking who he was, were answered, "I am your king, the king of Ethiopia." To which they replied with one voice, "You shall not pass; you are not our king."

The king then retires some paces, and then presents himself as to pass; and the cord is again drawn across his way by the young women so as to prevent him, and the question repeated, "Who are you?" The king answered, "I am your king, the king of Israel." But the damsels, resolved, even on this second attack, not to surrender but upon their own terms, again answer, "You shall not pass; you are not our king *."

* This is an abstract of the ceremonies used at the coronation of the kings at Axum, taken from the small MS. Chronicle, fol. 2.; the Appendix to the book of Axum; the Life of Susneus in the Annals, vol. 3.; and the account of Abyssinia by Tellez.—E.

The third time, after retiring, the king advances with a pace and air more determined; and the cruel virgins, again presenting the cord, and asking who he is, he answers, "I am your king, the king of Sion;" and, drawing his sword, cuts the silk cord asunder. Immediately upon this the young women cry, "It is a truth, you are our king; truly you are the king of Sion." Upon which they begin to sing Hallelujah, and in this they are joined by the court and army upon the plain; fire-arms are discharged, drums and trumpets sound; and the king, amidst these acclamations and rejoicings, advances to the foot of the stair of the church, where he dismounts, and there sits down upon a stone, which, by its remains, apparently was an altar of Anubis, or the dog-star. At his feet there is a large slab of free-stone, on which is the inscription mentioned by Poncet, and which shall be quoted hereafter, when I come to speak of the ruins of Axum.

After the king comes the nebrit, or keeper of the book of the law in Axum, supposed to represent Azarias, the son of Zadok; then the twelve umbares, or supreme judges, who, with Azarias, accompanied Menilek, the son of Solomon, when he brought the book of the law from Jerusalem, and these are supposed to represent the twelve tribes. After these follow the Abuna at the head of the priests, and the Itchegue at the head of the monks; then the court, who all pass through the aperture made by the division of the silk cord, which remains still upon the ground.

The king is first anointed, then crowned, and is accompanied half up the steps by the singing priests, called Depteras, chanting psalms and hymns. Here he stops at a hole made for the purpose in one of the steps, and is there fumigated with incense and myrrh, aloes, and cassia. Divine service is then celebrated;

and, after receiving the sacrament, he returns to the camp, where fourteen days should regularly be spent in feasting, and all manner of rejoicing and military exercise.

The king is, by the old custom, obliged to give a number of presents, the particulars of which are stated in the deftar, or treasury-book, the value, the person to whom they are due, and the time of giving; but a great part of these are gone into desuetude since the removal of the court from Tigré, as also many of the offices are now suppressed, and with them the presents due to them.

The nobles and the court were likewise obliged to give presents to the king upon that occasion. The present from the governor of Axum is two lions and a fillet of silk, upon which is wrote, "Mo Anbasa am Nizilet Solomon am Negade Jude—The lion of the tribe of Judah and race of Solomon has overcome." This serves as a form of investiture of lands that the king grants, a ribband, bearing this inscription, being tied round the head of the person to whom the lands are given.

This governor was then in rebellion, so did not assist at the ceremony. Notwithstanding the difference of expence which I have mentioned, by suppressing places, presents, and dues, the king, Tecla Haimanout, told me at Gondar, that when he was in Tigré, driven there by the late rebellion, Ras Michael had some thoughts of having him crowned there in contempt of his enemies; but, by the most moderate calculation that could be made, not to turn the ceremony into ridicule by parsimony, it would have cost 20,000 ounces of gold, or L. 50,000 Sterling; upon which, he laid aside the thoughts of it, saying to the king, "Sir, trust to me, 20,000 ounces of Tigré iron shall crown you better; if more is wanted, I will bestow it upon your enemies with pleasure till they are satis-

fied;" meaning the iron balls with which his soldiers loaded their musquets.

After the coronation was over, the king passed the Mareb, desiring to finish his campaign by the death of his competitor, Jacob; but that impostor knew too well the superiority of his rival, and hid himself in the inmost recesses, without any other attendants than a few goats, who furnished him with their milk, as well as their society.

Socinios left the affair of the rebel Jacob to be ended by Amsala Christos, an officer of great prudence, whom he made governor of Tigré; and, taking his brother Ras Sela Christos along with him, returned to Cogo*. Amsala Christos, being seized with a grievous sickness, saw how vain it was for him to pursue the suppression of a rebellion conducted by such a head as this impostor Jacob, and therefore secretly applied to two young men, Zara Johannes and Amha Georgis, brothers, and sons of the Shum Welled Georgis, who, having committed murder, were outlawed by Socinios, and, keeping hid in the mountains, had joined in fellowship with the impostor Jacob.

These, gained by the promise of pardon given them by Amsala Christos, chose an opportunity which their intimacy gave them, and, falling upon Jacob unawares in his retirement, they slew him, cut his head off, and sent it to the king, at Coga, who received it very thankfully, and returned it to Tigré to Amsala Christos, to be exposed publicly in all the province to undeceive the people; for it now appeared, that he had neither scars in his face, broken jaw, nor loss of teeth; but that the covering was intended only to conceal the little resemblance he bore to king Jacob,

* Then the metropolis upon the Lake Tzana.

slain, as we have seen, at the battle of Lebart. He was now found to have been a herdsman, in those very mountains of Bisan, to which he had so often fled for refuge while his rebellion lasted.

The king, in his return from Tigre, passing by Fremona, sent to the Jesuits there thirty ounces of gold, about L. 75 Sterling, for their immediate exigency; testifying, in the most gracious manner, his regret, "That the many affairs in which he was engaged had prevented him from hearing mass in their convent, as he very sincerely wished to do; but he left with them the Abuna Simon, to whom he had recommended to study their religion and be a friend to it."

In this he shewed his want of penetration and experience; for, though he had seen war between soldier and soldier, who, after having been in the most violent state of enmity, had died in defence of each other as friends, he was not aware of that degree of enmity which reigns upon difference of opinion, not to say religion, between priest and priest. It was not long, however, before he saw it, and the example was in the person of his present friend, the Abuna Simon.

While Socinios was yet in Tigré, news were brought to Coga from Woggora to Sanuda Tzef Leham* of Dembea, who could not accompany the king to Tigré on account of sickness, but was left with the charge of the capital and palace during the king's absence, that Melchizedec, one of the meanest and lowest servants of the late king Melec Segued, had rebelled, and was collecting troops, consisting of soldiers, servants, and dependents of that prince, and had slain some of Socinios's servants. Sanuda was a brave and active offi-

* Register of the cattle; so the governor of Dembea is called.

cer; but, being without troops, (the king having carried the whole army to Tigré) immediately set out from Maitsha to the town of Tchelga, one of the frontiers of Abyssinia, possessed by Wed Ageeb, prince of the Arabs.

It is here to be observed, that though the territorial right of Tchelga did then, and does still, appertain to the kingdom of Abyssinia, yet the possession of it is ceded by agreement to Wed Ageeb, under whose protection the caravans from Egypt and Sennaar, and those from Abyssinia to Sennaar and Egypt, were understood to be ever since they were cut off in the last century by the basha of Suakem, for this purpose, that a custom-house might be erected, and the duties divided equally between the two kingdoms. The same is the case with Serke, a town belonging to Sennaar, ceded for the same purpose to the king of Abyssinia.

It happened that Abd-el cader*, son of Ounsa, late king of Sennaar, or of the Funge, as he is called in the Abyssinian annals, had been deposed by his subjects in the 4th year of his reign, and remained at Tchelga under the mutual protection of Wed Ageeb and the emperor of Abyssinia, a kind of prisoner to them both; and had brought with him a number of soldiers and dependents, the partakers of his former good fortune, who, finding safety and good usage at Tchelga, were naturally well-affected to the king. These, ready mounted and armed, joined Sanuda immediately upon his declaring the exigency; and with these he marched straight to Coga, to the defence of the palace with which he had been intrusted.

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* See the History of the rise of this monarchy in my return through Senaar.

Melchizedec, whose design was against Coga, no sooner heard Sanuda was arrived there, than he marched to surprise him, and a very bloody and obstinate engagement followed. The Funge, piqued in honour to render this service to their protector, fought so obstinately that they were all slain; and Sanuda, mounted that day upon a fleet horse belonging to Socinios, escaped with difficulty, much wounded.

As soon as Socinios heard of this misfortune, he sent Ras Emana Christos, who marched straight to Woggora, creating Zenobius, son of Ismael, governor of that district; and there he found Sanuda, Zenobius, and Ligaba Za Denghel together, in a place called Deberasso.

As soon as the rebel Melchizedec heard Emana Christos was come, and with him the fore-mentioned noblemen, he set himself to exert the utmost of his power, to draw together forces of all kinds, from every part he could get them; and his army was soon increased to such a degree, as, notwithstanding the presence of Emana Christos, to strike terror into all the territory and towns of Dembea. Nothing was wanting but a king of the royal race for whom to fight. Without a chief of this kind, it was evident that the army, however often successful, would at last disperse. They, therefore, brought one Arzo, a prince of the royal blood, from his hiding-place in Begemder. Arzo, in return for a throne, conferred the place of Ras upon Melchizedec. Za Christos, son of Hatzir Abib, was appointed to the command of the army under him; and, having finished this, and many such necessary preparatives, they marched straight to meet Emana Christos, with a better countenance than rebel armies generally bear.

On the 9th of March 1611, at nine in the morning, the two armies were first in sight of each other;

nor did they long delay coming to an engagement. The battle was very obstinate and bloody; Melchizedec re-established his character for worth, at least as a soldier; and the same did Za Christos. Of the competitor Arzo, history makes no mention; his blood, probably, was too precious to risk the spilling of it, being so far-fetched as from king Solomon. After a most obstinate resistance, part of Za Christos's army was broken and put to flight; but it rallied so often, and sold the ground it yielded so dear, that it gave time to Emana Christos to come up to his army's assistance.

The Ras, who was as brave a soldier as he was a wise and prudent general, saw it was a time when all should be risked, and threw himself into the midst of his enemies; and he was now arrived near the place where Melchizedec fought, when that rebel, seeing him advancing so fast among his slaughtered followers, guessing his intention, declined the combat, turned his horse and fled, while affairs even yet appeared in his favour. This panic of the leader had the effect it ordinarily has in barbarous armies. Nobody considered how the prospect of the general issue stood; they fled with Melchizedec, and lost more men than would have secured them victory had they stood in their ranks.

A body of troops, joined by some peasants of Begemder, pursued Melchizedec so closely that they came up with him, and took him prisoner, together with Tensa Christos, a very active partizan, and enemy to Emana Christos. Having brought them to the camp, before the Ras returned to Coga, they were tried and condemned to die for rebellion, as traitors, and the sentence immediately executed, after which their heads were sent to the king. Very soon after this, Arzo, and his general Za Christos, were taken

and sent to the king, who ordered them to be tried by the judges in common form, and they underwent the same fate.

The king was employed in the winter season, while he resided at Coga, in building a new church, called St Gabriel. But the season of taking the field being come, he marched out with his army and halted at Gorgora, sending Emana Christos and Sela Christos against the rebels. These were not in a particular clan, or province, for all the country was in rebellion, from the head of the Nile round, eastward, to the frontiers of Tigre. Part of them, indeed, were not in arms, but refused to pay their quota of the revenue; part of them were in arms, and would neither pay, nor admit a governor from the king among them; others willingly submitted to Socinios, and were armed, only thereby to exempt themselves from payment.

Sela Christos fell upon the inhabitants of the mountainous district of Gusman, on the Nile, whose principal strong-hold, Ouree Amha, he forced, killing many, and carrying away their children as slaves, which, upon the intercession of Peter Paez, were given to the Jesuits to be educated as Catholics.

The next attempt was upon the Gongas, a black Pagan nation, with which he had the same success; the rest were the Agows, a very numerous people, all confederates and in arms, and not willing to hear of any composition. The king ordered one of these tribes, the Zalabassa, to be extirpated as far as possible, and their country laid waste. But notwithstanding this example, which met with great interruption in the execution, the Agows continued in rebellion for several years afterwards, but much impoverished and lessened in number by variety of victories obtained over them.

The two next years were spent in unimportant skir-

mishes with the Agows of Damot, and with the Galla, invaders of Gojam. In 1615, the year after, Tecla Georgis, made governor of Samen, and Welled Hawaryat, shum of Tsalemat*, were both sent against a rebel, who declared himself competitor for the crown. His name was Amdo. He pretended to be the late king Jacob, son of Melec Segued; and this character he gave himself, without the smallest communication with the relations, or connections, of that prince. As soon as Assera Christos and Tecla Garima, servants of Welled Hawaryat, heard of this adventurer, they surprised him at Tsalemat, and, putting him in irons, confined him in the house of Assera Christos.

Gideon, king of the Jews, whose residence was on the high mountain of Samen, upon hearing that Amdo was prisoner, sent a body of armed men who surprised Assera Christos in his own house in the night, and killed him, bringing with them his prisoner Amdo to Samen, and delivered him to Gideon there; who not only took him into protection, but assisted him in raising an army by every means in his power. There were not wanting there idle vagabonds and lawless people enough, who fled to the standard of a prince, whose sole view seemed to be murder, robbery, and all sort of licentiousness. It was not long till Amdo, by the assistance of Gideon, found himself at the head of an army, strong enough to leave the mountain, and try his fortune in the plains below, where he laid waste Shawada, Tsalemat, and all the countries about Samen, which persevered in their duty to the king.

Socinios, upon this, appointed Julius, his son-in-

* A low territory at the foot of Lamalmon.—To this note of Mr Bruce it may be added, that Tsalmat seems to be the district of Salemt, which he passed on his way to Gondar.—E.

law, governor of Woggora, Samen, Waag, and Abbergale, that is, of all the low countries from the borders of the Tacazze to Dembea. Abram, an old officer of the king, desirous to stop the progress of the rebel, marched against him, and offered him battle; but that brave officer had not the success his intention deserved, for he was defeated and slain; which had such an effect upon Julius, that without hazarding his fortune further, he sent to beseech the king to march against Amdo with all possible expedition, as his affairs were become desperate in that part of his dominions.

The king hereupon marched straight to Woggora, and joined Julius at Shimbra-Zuggan; whence he descended from Samen, and encamped upon Tocur-Ohha (the black river); thence he proceeded to Debil, and then to Sobra; and from this last station he sent a detachment of his army to attack a strong mountain called Messiraba, one of the natural fortresses of Gideon, which was forced by the king's troops after some resistance, and the whole inhabitants, without distinction of age, or sex, put to the sword; for such were the orders of the king.

This first success very much disheartened the rebels; for Messiraba was, by nature, one of their strongest mountains; and it, besides, had been fortified by art, furnished with plenty of provisions, and a number of good troops. The next mountain Socinios attacked was Hotchi, and the third Amba Za Hancasse, where he had like success, and treated the inhabitants in the same manner; thence he removed his army to Seganat, where he met with stout resistance; but this mountain, too, was at last taken, Gideon himself escaping narrowly by the bravery of his principal general, who, fighting desperately, was slain by a musqueteer.

The constant success of the king, and the bloody manner in which he pursued his victory, began to alarm Gideon, lest the end should be the extirpation of his whole nation. He, therefore, made an overture to the king, that, if he would pardon him and grant him peace, he would deliver the rebel Amdo bound into his hands.

The king assented to this, and Amdo was accordingly delivered up. Being convicted of rebellion and murder, he was sentenced to be nailed to a cross, and to remain there till he died. But the terrible cries and groans which he made, while they were fixing him to the cross, so much shocked the ears of the king, that he ordered him to be taken down, and his head struck off with an axe, which was executed in the midst of the camp.

Socinios after this retired to Dancaz, and ordered Kefla, governor of Gojam, and Jonael, his master of the household, to march suddenly and surprise Belaya, a country belonging to the Gongas and Guba, Pagan nations, on whom, every year, he made war, for the sake of taking slaves for the use of the palace. These two officers, with a large body, mostly horse, fell unawares upon the savages at Belaya, slaying part, and bringing away their children. But not content with this, they likewise attacked the two districts of Agows, Dengui and Sankara, then in peace with the king, and drove away an immense number of cattle, which the king no sooner heard, than he ordered a strict search to be made, and the whole cattle belonging to the Agows to be gathered together, and restored to their respective owners; a piece of justice which softened the hearts of this people more than all the severities that had been hitherto used; and the good effects of which were soon after seen upon the

Agows, though it produced something very different in the conduct of Jonael.

The king this year, 1616, left his capital at the usual time, in the month of November, and ordered his whole household to attend him. His intention was against the Galla on the west of Gojam, especially the tribe called Libo. But this campaign was rendered fruitless by the death of the king's eldest son, Kennaffer Christos, a young prince of great hopes, esteemed both by the king and his people. He had an excellent understanding, and the most affable manners possible, to those even whom he did not like; was very fond of the soldiers; merciful, generous, and liberal; and was thought to be the favourite of the king his father, who buried him with great pomp in the church of Debra Roma, built by king Isaac, in the lake Tzana.

In the midst of this mourning, there came a very bloody order* from the king. History barely tells us the fact, but does not assign any other reason than the wanton manner in which Gideon, king of the Jews, had endeavoured to disturb his reign and kingdom, which was thought a sufficient excuse for it. However this may be, the king gave orders to Kasmati Julius, Kasmati Welled Hawaryat, Billetana Gueta Jonael, and Fit-Aurari Hosannah, to extirpate all the Falasha that were in Foggora, Janfakara, and Begenarwe, to the borders of Samen; also all that were in Bagla, and in all the districts under their command, wherever they could find them; and very few of them escaped, excepting some who fled with Phineas.

In this massacre, which was very general, and ex-

* It was probably part of the fruits of the new religion, and the work of his new religious advisers.

cuted very suddenly, fell Gideon, king of that people; a man of great reputation, not only among his subjects, but throughout all Abyssinia, reputed also immensely rich. His treasures, supposed to be concealed in the mountains, are the objects of the search of the Abyssinians to this day.

The children of those that were slain were sold for slaves by the king; and all the Falasha in Dembea, and the low countries immediately in the king's power, were ordered, upon pain of death, to renounce their religion, and be baptised. To this they consented, seeing there was no remedy; and the king unwisely imagined, that he had extinguished, by one blow, the religion which was that of his country long before Christianity, by the unwarrantable butchery of a number of people, whom he had surprised living in security under the assurance of peace. Many of them were baptised accordingly, and they were all ordered to plow and harrow upon the Sabbath-day.

The king next sent orders to Sela Christos, and Kefla, governor of Gojam, that assembling their troops, they should transfer the war into Bizamo, a province on the south-side of the Nile, called also in the books a kingdom. Through this lies the road of the merchants leading to Narea. It is inhabited by several clans of Pagans, which together make the great division of these nations into Boren, and Bertuma Galla*.

The army passed the Nile, laying waste the whole country, driving off the cattle, collecting the women and children as slaves, and putting all the men to the sword; without these people, though they make constant inroads into Gojam, appearing anywhere in force

* The words, Boren, and Bertuma Galla, have no meaning in the Ethiopic.

to stop the desolation of their country. The whole tract between Narea and the Nile was now cleared of enemies, and a number of priests at that time sent to revive drooping Christianity in those parts.

In the year 1617, a league was again made among the Boren Galla, that part of them should invade Gojam, while the others (namely the Marawa) should enter Begemder. Upon hearing this, the king in haste marched to Begemder, that he might be ready in case of need to assist Tigré. He then fixed his head-quarters at Shima, but from this he speedily removed; and, passing Emfras, came to Dobit, a favourite residence of the emperor Jacob, where he held a council to determine which of the two provinces he should first assist.

It was the general opinion of his officers, that to march at that time of the year into Tigré by Begemder, was to destroy the army, and distress both provinces; that an army, well-provided with horse, was necessary for acting with success against the Galla; and that, in effect, though the royal army at present was so appointed, yet there was no grass at that time of the year in all that march for the subsistence of the cavalry, and very little water for the use of man, or beast; an inconvenience the Galla themselves must experience if they attempted an invasion that way. It was moreover urged, that, if the king should march through Woggora and Lamalmon, they might get more food for their beasts, and water, too; but then they would throw themselves far from the place where the Galla had entered, and would be obliged to fall into the former road, with the inconveniences already stated. The consequence of this deliberation was, that with very great regret the good of the commonwealth obliged them to leave Tigré to the protection of Providence alone for a time, and hasten to meet the enemy that were then destroying Gojam.

With this view the king left Dobit, and came to the river Gomara in Foggora. He then passed the Nile near Dara, and came to Selalo, where he heard that the Djawi had passed the Nile from Bizamo, and entered Gojam at the opposite side to where he then was. He there left his baggage, and, by a forced march, advancing three days journey in one, he came to Bed, upon the river Sadi; but, instead of finding the enemy there, he received intelligence from Sela Christos, that he had met the Galla immediately after their passing the Nile; had fought them and cut their army to pieces, without allowing them time to ravage the country.

Upon this good news the king turned off on the road to Tchegal and Wainadassa, and ordered Bela Christos to assemble as great an army as he could, and fall upon the Djawi and Galla in Walaka and Shoa, as also Ras Sela Christos, to pass the Nile and join him there.

That general lost no time, but marched straight to Amca Ohha, or the river Amca, where he found the Edjow, who fled upon his coming, without giving him any opportunity of bringing them to an engagement, abandoning their wives, children, and substance, to the mercy of the enemy. Sela Christos, having finished this expedition as he intended, returned to join the king, whom he found encamped upon the river Suqua, near Debra Werk, guarding those provinces in the absence of Sela Christos. From this the king, retreating towards Dembea, passed the Nile near Dara, and encamped at Zinzenam, whence he marched round the lake into Dembea to his palace at Gorgora.

This village, whose name signifies rain upon rain, affords us a proof of what I have said in speaking of the cause of the overflowing of the Nile, in contradic-

tion to the Adulitic inscription, that no snow falls in Abyssinia, or rather, that though snow may have fallen in the course of centuries, it is a phenomenon so rare as not to have a name or word to express it in the whole language, and is entirely unknown to the people in general, at least to the west of the Tacazze.

The Abyssinian historian, from whom these memoirs are composed, says, "That this village, called Zinzenam, has its name from an extraordinary circumstance that once happened in these parts; for a shower of rain fell, which was not properly of the nature of rain, as it did not run upon the ground, but remained very light, having scarce the weight of feathers, of a beautiful white colour, like flour; it fell in showers, and occasioned a darkness in the air more than rain, and liker to mist. It covered the face of the whole country for several days, retaining its whiteness the whole time, then went away like dew, without leaving any smell or unwholesome effect behind it."

This was certainly the accidental phenomenon of a day; for, notwithstanding the height of the mountains Taranta and Lamalmon, snow never was seen there, at least for ages past; and Lasta, in whose mountains armies have perished by cold, as far as a very particular inquiry ever could go, never yet had snow upon them. Zinzenam is not in these mountains, or in any elevated situation. On the contrary, it is adjoining to the plain country of Foggora, near where it borders upon Begemder, not above 20 miles from the second cataract, or 40 miles from Gondar; so that this must have been a short and accidental change of the atmosphere, of which there are examples of many different kinds, in the histories of all countries.

As soon as the weather permitted, the king left his his palace at Gorgora in the way to Tocussa, where he

staid several days; removed thence to Tenkel, where he continued also four days, and proceeded to Gunké, where he halted. From his head-quarters at Gunké, meditating an expedition against Atbara, he sent a messenger to Nile Wed Ageeb, prince of the Arabs, desiring a meeting with him before he attacked the Funge *, for so they call the subjects of the new monarchy, lately established at Sennaar by the blacks over the Arabs, under Wed Ageeb, a very considerable part of whose territory they had taken by force, and now enjoyed as their own possessions.

Abd-el-cader, son of Ounsa, was the ninth prince of the race of Funge then reigning; a weak, and ill-inclined man, but with whom Socinios had hitherto lived in friendship, and, in a late treaty had sent him as a present, a nagareet, or kettle-drum, richly ornamented with gold, with a gold chain to hang it by. Abd-el-cader, on his part, returned to Socinios a trained falcon, of an excellent kind, very much esteemed among the Arabs.

Soon after this, Abd-el-cader was deposed by his brother Adelan, son of Ounsa, and fled to Tchelga, under protection of the king of Abyssinia, who allowed him an honourable maintenance; a custom always observed in such cases in the East, by princes towards their unfortunate neighbours.

Baady, son of Abd-el-cader, an active and violent young prince, although he deposed his uncle Adelan, took this protection of his father in bad part. It was likewise suggested to him, that the present sent by Socinios, a nagareet, or kettle-drum, imported, that Socinios considered him as his vassal, the drum being the sign of investiture sent by the king to any one of his

* The Funge were Shilook from the Bahar el-Abiad, a black Pagan tribe which conquered Sennaar.—E.

subjects whom he appoints to govern a province, and that the return of the falcon was likely to be considered as the acknowledgment of a vassal to his superior, Baady, upon his accession to the throne, was resolved to rectify this too great respect shewn on the part of his father, by an affront he resolved to offer. With this view, he sent to Socinios two old, blind, and lame horses.

Socinios took this amiss, as it was intended he should, and the slight was immediately followed by the troops of Atbara, under Nile Wed Ageeb, sent by Baady to make an inroad into Abyssinia, to lay waste the country, and drive off the people, with orders to sell them as slaves.

Among the most active in this expedition, were those of the town of Serke. When Baady complained that his father and rival was protected in his own town of Tchelga, it had been answered, That true it was, Tchelga had been ceded and did belong to Sennaar, for every purpose of revenue; but that the sovereignty of the place had never been alienated or surrendered to the king of Sennaar, but remained now, as ever, vested in the king of Abyssinia. Serke stood precisely in the same situation with respect to Abyssinia, as Tchelga did to Sennaar, when Socinios demanded satisfaction for the violence committed against him by his own town of Serke. The same answer was given him, That for all fiscal purposes Serke was his, but owed him no allegiance; for, being part of the kingdom of Sennaar, it was bound to assist its sovereign in all wars against his enemies.

Socinios, deeply engaged in the troubles that attended the beginning of his reign, passed over for a time both the affront and injury, but sent into Atbara to Nile Wed Ageeb, proposing a treaty with him independent of the king of Sennaar.

There were, at this time, three sorts of people that inhabited the whole country from lat. 13° (the mountains of Abyssinia) to the tropic of Cancer (the frontiers of Egypt). The first was the Funge, or negroes, established in Atbara since the year 1504, by conquest. The second, the old inhabitants of that country, known in very early ages by the name of Shepherds, which continues with them to this day; and these lived under a female government. The third, the Arabs, who came hither after the conquests of Egypt, in an army under Caled Ibn el Waalid, or Saif Ullah, the Sword of God, during the Khalifat of Omar, destined to subdue Nubia, and others still later, in the time of Salidan and his brother.

These Arabs had associated with the first inhabitants, the Shepherds, from a similarity of life and manners, and, by treaty, the Funge had established a tribute to be paid them from both; after which, these were to enjoy their former habitations without further molestation.

This prince of the Arabs, Nile Wed Ageeb, embraced the offer of the king of Abyssinia very readily. A treaty was accordingly made between Socinios and him, and a territory in Abyssinia granted him on the frontiers, to which he could retire in safety, as often as his affairs were embroiled with the state of Sennaar.

It happened soon after this, that Alico, a Mahometan, governor of the Mazaga for Socinios, that is, of Nara and Ras el Feel, a low country, as the name imports, of black earth, revolted from his master, and fled to Sennaar, carrying with him a number of the king's horses. Socinios made his complaint to the king of Sennaar, who took no notice of it, neither returned any answer; which exasperated Socinios so much that it produced the present expedition, and was a cause of much bloodshed, and of a war which,

at least in intention, lasts to this day between the two kingdoms.

Wed Ageeb, upon Socinios's first summons, came to Gunke, his head-quarters, attended by a number of troops, and some of the best horse in Atbara. Upon his entering the king's tent, he prostrated himself, (as is the Abyssinian custom) acknowledged himself the king's vassal, and brought presents with him to a very considerable value. Socinios received him with great marks of distinction and kindness. He decorated him with a chain and bracelets of gold, and gave him a dagger of exquisite workmanship, mounted with the same metal; clothed him in silk and damask after the Abyssinian fashion, and confirmed the ancient treaty with him. The fruit of all this was presently seen; the king and his new ally fell suddenly upon Serke, put all the male inhabitants to the sword, sold the women and children as slaves, and burned the town to the ground. The same they did to every inhabited place on that side of the frontier, west to Fazuclo. After which, the king, having sent a sarcastic compliment to Baady, returned to Dancaz, taking Wed Ageeb with him.

Socinios had only ravaged the frontier of the kingdom of Sennaar to the westward, from Serke towards Fazuclo. This was but a part of the large scheme of vengeance he had resolved to execute progressively from Serke, in reparation of the affront he had received from the king of the Funge. But he delegated what remained to the two princes, his sons, and the governor of Tigré.

Welled Hawaryat, at the head of the Koccob horse, and another body of cavalry, reckoned equal in valour, called Maia, with the greatest part of the king's household troops, were ordered to fall upon that part of the frontier of Sennaar, which the king had left from Serke eastward. Melca Christos, with the horse of

Sire and Samen, was appointed to attack the frontier still farther east, opposite to the province of Sire. Tecla Georgis, governor of Tigré, was directed to lay waste that part of the kingdom of Sennaar, bordering upon the frontiers of his province.

The whole of this expedition succeeded to a wish; only Melca Christos, in passing through the country of the Shangalla, was met by a large army of that people, who, thinking the expedition intended against them, had attacked him in his passage, with some appearance of advantage; but, by his own exertions, and those of his troops, alarmed at their prince's danger, he not only extricated himself from the bad situation he was in, but gave the Shangalla so entire an overthrow, that one of their tribes was nearly exterminated by that day's slaughter, and crowds of women and children sent slaves to the king at Dancaz.

The delay that this occasioned had no bad effect upon the expedition. The victorious troops poured immediately into Atbara, under Melca Christos, and completed the destruction made by Welled Hawaryat, and the governor of Tigré. All Sennaar was filled with people flying from the conquerors, and an immense number of cattle was driven away by the three armies. Baady seems to have been an idle spectator of this havock made in his kingdom; and the armies returned without loss to Dancaz, loaded with plunder.

Still the vengeance of Socinios was not satisfied. The Baharnagash, Guebra Mariam, was commanded to march against Fatima, queen of the Shepherds, called at that time Negusta Errum, queen of the Greeks*. This was a princess who governed the remnant of that ancient race of people, once the sovereigns of the whole country, who, for several dynastics,

* Probably the Albanim of Edrisi.—E.

were masters of Egypt, and who still, among their antient customs, preserved that known one, of always placing a woman upon the throne. Her residence was at Mendera *, on the north-east of Atbara, one of the largest and most populous towns in it; a town, indeed, built like the rest, of clay, straw, and reeds, but not less populous, or flourishing, on that account. It was in the way of the caravans from Suakem, both to Abyssinia and Sennaar, as also of those large caravans to and from Sudan, the Negro country upon the Niger, which then came, and still use that road in their way to Mecca. Its female sovereign was considered as guardian of that communication, and the caravans passing it.

The Baharnagash had orders from Socinios to pursue this queen till he had taken her prisoner, and to bring her in that condition into his presence. The enterprise was by no means an easy one. Great part of the road was without water; but Guebra Mariam, the Baharnagash, was an active and prudent officer, and perfectly acquainted with the several parts of the country. With a small, but veteran army, he marched down the Mareb, between that river and the mountains, destroying all the places through which he passed, putting the inhabitants unmercifully to the sword, that no one might approach him, nor any report be made of his numbers, which were everywhere magnified by those that escaped, and who computed them from the greatness of the desolation they had occasioned.

On the 13th day he came before Mendera, and sent a summons to the queen, Fatima, to surrender. Being told that she had fled on his approach, he answered, That he cared not where she was; but that, unless

* See the Map.

she surrendered herself prisoner before he entered Mendera, he would first set the town on fire, and then quench the flames by the blood of its inhabitants.

Fatima, though old and infirm, was too great a lover of her people to risk the fulfilling this threat from any consideration of what might happen to her. She surrendered herself to Guebra Mariam, with two attendants; and he, without loss of time, marched back to his own country, abstaining from every sort of violence or excess in his way, from respect to his female prisoner, whom he brought in triumph before Socinios to Dancaz, and was the first messenger of his own victory.

Socinios received this queen of the Greeks on his throne; but, in consideration of her infirmities, dispensed with the ceremony of prostration, constantly observed in Abyssinia on being introduced to the presence of the king: seeing that she was unable to stand during the time of her interrogation, he ordered a low stool to be set for her on the ground; a piece of consideration very rarely shewn to any stranger in Abyssinia, however great their dignity and quality.

Socinios sternly demanded of his prisoner, "Why she and her predecessors, being vassals to the crown of Abyssinia, had not only omitted the payment of their tribute, but had not even sent the customary presents to him upon his accession to the throne?"

To this the queen answered, with great frankness and candour, "That it was true, such tributes and presents were due, and were also punctually paid from old times by her ancestors to his, as long as protection was afforded them and their people, and this was the principal cause of paying that tribute; but the Abyssinians having first suffered the country to be in great part conquered by the Arabs, and then again by the Funge, without ever interfering, she had conclu-

ded a peace with the Funge of Sennaar, and paid the tribute to them, in consequence of which they defended her from the Arabs: That she had had no soldiers, but such as were employed in keeping a strict watch over the road through the desert to Suakem, which was anciently trusted to her; that the other part of her subjects was occupied in keeping and rearing great herds of cattle for the markets of Sennaar and other towns, as well as camels for the caravans of Mecca, Cairo, and Sudan, both employments being of public benefit; and, therefore, as she did harm to none, she had a greater reason to wonder what could be his motive of sending so far from home to seek her, and her harmless subjects, in the desert, with such effusion of innocent blood."

The king hearing this sagacious answer, which was followed by many others of the kind, was extremely pleased; but assured her, "That he intended to maintain his ancient right both over her subjects, and the Arabs under Wed Ageeb, who was now his vassal, in all the country from Fazuclo to Suakem; that he considered the Funge as usurpers, and would certainly treat them as such." After this Socinios dismissed the queen, and gave her assurance of protection; having first clothed her, as his vassal, in silk and damask, after the fashion of women in her own country.

But it was not long before this train of success met with a considerable check. Very soon afterwards, the king being in Gojam, a message was brought to him from the principal people of Narea, informing him plainly, "That the Benero *, having become cruel and avaricious, put many people to death wantonly, and many more for the sake of their money; having taken from them their wives and daughters, either for

* The king.

his own pleasure, or to sell them as slaves to the Galla: they had at last murdered him, and chosen a man in his room distinguished for virtue and goodness."

The king was very much exasperated at this message. He told them, however bad the Benero might have been, he considered his murder as an insult done to himself, and had, therefore, dispatched Mustapha Basha with some troops, and given command to all the Mahometans in Narea to assist him, and to inquire into the death of the Benero, and the merit of his successor.

At the same time, the Galla made an inroad into Begemder; and Welled Hawaryat, assembling what troops he could, in haste, to stop the desolation of that province, and having come in sight of the enemy, he was forsaken by his army, and slain, together with the Cantiba of Dembea, Amdo, and Nile Wed Ageeb, prince of the Arabs, after fighting manfully for the king. Socinios, upon the arrival of this news, gave himself up to immoderate sorrow; not so much for the loss of the army, which had misbehaved, as for the death of Welled Hawaryat, his favourite son, and Amdo and Nile, the two best officers in his army.

It will now be necessary that we look back a little to the state of religious affairs in Abyssinia, which began from this time to have influence in every measure, and greatly to promote the troubles of that empire; though they were by no means their only cause, as some have said, with a view to throw greater odium upon the Jesuits, who surely have enough to answer for, without inflaming the account by any exaggeration.

Paez, in the course of building the palace at Gorgora, had deservedly astonished the whole kingdom by a display of his universal genius and capacity. If he was assiduous and diligent in raising this fabric, he had not neglected the advancing of another, the

conversion of Abyssinia to the obedience of the see of Rome.

Ras Sela Christos (if we believe these missionaries) had converted himself, by reading with attention the Abyssinian books only. Being about to depart from Gojam to fight against the Galla, he wanted very much to have made his renunciation and confession in the presence of Peter Paez. But, as he was busied at Gorgora building a convent and palace there, he contented himself with another Jesuit, Francisco Antonio d'Angelis; and, being victorious in his expedition, he gave the fathers ground and a sum of money to build a monastery at Collela, which was now the third in Abyssinia belonging to the Jesuits.

As for the king, though probably already determined in his own mind, he had not taken any step so decisive as could induce the compliance of others. Disputes were constantly maintained, for the most part in his presence, between the missionaries and the Abyssinian monks, chiefly concerning the long agitated question, the two natures in Christ, in which, although the victory declared always in favour of the Jesuits, if we may credit their own representations, no conviction followed on the part of the adversaries. At last Abuna Simon complained to the king, that unusual and irregular things had been permitted without his knowledge; that disputes upon articles of faith had been held without calling him, or his being permitted to give his clergy the advantage of his support in these controversies.

The king, who did not believe that the Abuna's eloquence, or learning, would make any great alteration, ordered the disputations to be held a-new in the Abuna's presence. That priest's ignorance made the matter worse; and the king, holding this point as now settled, made his first public declaration, that there

were two natures in Christ, perfect God and perfect man, really distinct between themselves, but united in one divine person, which is the Christ.

At this time, letters came, by way of India, both from the king of Spain, Philip II., dated in Madrid the 15th of March 1609, and from the pope, Paul V., of the 4th of January 1611. These letters contain nothing but general declamatory exhortations to Socinios, to persevere in the Christian faith, assuring him of the assistance of the Holy Spirit, instead of those Portuguese regiments which he had solicited. However, the affair of the conversion being altogether settled between the king and Paez, it was thought proper to make the renunciation first, and then depend upon the king of Spain and the pope for sending the soldiers, if their prayers were not effectual.

It was necessary that Socinios should write to the pope, notifying his submission to the see of Rome. But letters on such a subject were thought of too great consequence to be sent, as former dispatches to Europe had been, without being accompanied by proper persons, who, upon occasion, might assume the character of ambassadors, and give any assurance or explanation needful.

It was at the same time considered, that the way by Masuah was so liable to accidents, the intermediate province of Tigré being still, as it were, in a state of rebellion, that it would be easy for the enemies of the Catholic faith to intercept these messengers and letters by the way, so that their contents might be published amongst the king's enemies in Abyssinia, without ever being made known in Europe. Some proposed the longer, but, as they apprehended, the more secure way, by passing Narea, and the provinces south of the frontiers of that kingdom, partly inhabited by

Pagans, partly by Mahometans, to Melinda, on the Indian Ocean, where they might embark for Goa.

Lots were cast among the missionaries who of their number should undertake this long and dangerous journey. The lot fell upon Antonio Fernandes, a man of great prudence, much esteemed by the king, and by the general voice allowed to be the most proper of all the society for this undertaking. He, on his part, named Fecur Egzie (beloved of the Lord) as his companion, to be ambassador to the king of Spain and pope. This man had been one of the first of the Abyssinians converted to the Catholic faith by the Jesuits, and he continued in it steadily to his death. He was a person of tried courage and prudence, and of a pleasant and agreeable conversation.

In the beginning of March 1613, Antonio Fernandes * set out for Gojam, where was Ras Sela Christos. Fecur Egzie had set out before, that he might adjust his family affairs, and took with him ten Portuguese, six of whom were to go no farther than Narea, and return, the other four to embark with him for India.

The governor detained the small company till he procured guides from among the Shats and Gallas, barbarous nations near Narea, and eastward of it, from whom he took hostages for properly protecting this caravan in their way, paying them well, as an encouragement for behaving honestly and faithfully.

On the 15th of April they had set out from Umbarma, then the head-quarters of Sela Christos, who gave them for guards forty men armed with shields and javelins. Nor was it long before their difficulties began. Travelling about two days to the west, they came to Senasse, the principal village, or habitation,

* See the provincial letters of the Jesuits in Telez, lib. iv. c. 10. 5.

of the Pagan Gongas, very recently in rebellion, and nearly destroyed, rather than subdued. To the first demand of safe conduct, they answered in a manner which shewed, that, far from defending the travellers from others, they were resolved themselves to fall upon them, and rob or murder them in the way. One Portuguese offered himself to return with Fernandez to complain of these savages to Sela Christos; who, upon their arrival, dispatched three officers with troops to chastise these Pagans, and convey the ambassador and his attendants out of their territory and reach.

The Gongas, being informed that a complaint was sent to Sela Christos, which would infallibly be followed by a detachment of troops, gave the ambassador the safeguard he demanded, which carried him in three days to Miné *. This is the name of some miserable villages, often rebuilt, and as often destroyed, upon a ford of the Nile, over which is the ordinary passage for the Mahometan merchants into Bizamo, the way to the mountainous country of Narea and Caffa. As the rains had begun to fall here with violence, when Fernandes and his companions arrived, they were obliged to pass the river on skins blown full of wind.

The distance from Miné to Narea is 50 leagues due south, with little inclination to west. The road to it, and the places through which you pass, are very distinctly set down in my map, and I believe, without any material error; it is the only place where the reader can find this route, which till now, has never been published.

The next day our travellers entered the kingdom of Bizamo, inhabited by Pagan Galla. These people

* Which signifies the Passage.

came in crowds with arms in their hands, insisting upon being paid for the liberty of passing through their country; but, seeing the company of the ambassador take to their arms likewise, they compounded for a few bricks of salt, and coarse cotton cloths, and thereupon suffered them to pass. The same day, the guide, sent from Narea to conduct them by crooked and unfrequented paths out of the way of the Pagan Galla, made them enter into a large thicket, through which they could scarcely force themselves; after which they came to a river called Maleg, when it was nearly night. Next day they could find no ford where they could pass. They now entertained a suspicion, that the guard from Narea had betrayed them, and intended to leave them in these woods to meet their death from the Galla.

The day after, they found the ford, and passed it without difficulty; and, being on the other side, they began to be a little more composed, as being far from the Pagans, and now near entering the territory of Narea. After ascending a high mountain, they came to Gonca, where they found a garrison under one of the principal officers of that kingdom, who received them with great marks of honour and joy, on account of the warm recommendation Sela Christos had given them, and perhaps as much for a considerable present they had brought along with them.

Narea, the southmost province of the Abyssinian empire, is still governed by its native princes, who are called the Beneros. Its territory reached formerly to Bizamo.

The Galla have quite surrounded them, especially on the south-east and north. What is to the west is a part of Africa, the most unknown. The people of Narea have a small trade with Melinda on the Indian Ocean, and with Angola on the western, by means of

intermediate nations. Narea is abundantly supplied with gold from that part of the Negro country which is nearest them. Some have indeed said there is gold in Narea; but after a diligent investigation, I find it comes chiefly from towards the Atlantic.

The kingdom of Narea stands, like a fortified place, in the middle of a plain. Many rivers, rising in the fourth and fifth degrees of latitude, spread themselves, for want of level, over this flat country, and stagnate in very extensive marshes, from south by east, to the point of north or north-west.

The foot of the mountains, or edge of these marshes nearest Narea, is thick overgrown with coffee trees, which, if not the only, is the largest tree known there. Then comes the mountainous country of Narea Proper, which is interspersed with small, unwholesome, but very fertile vallies. Immediately adjoining is the more mountainous country of Caffa, without any level ground whatever. It is said to be governed by a separate prince: they were converted to Christianity in the time of Melec Segued, some time after the conversion of Narea. The Galla, having settled themselves in all the flat ground, to the very edge of the marshes, have, in great measure, cut off the communication with Abyssinia for many years together; so that their continuance in the Christian faith seems very precarious and uncertain, for want of books and priests to instruct them *.

The Nareans of the high country are the lightest in colour of any people in Abyssinia; but those that live on the borders of the marshes below are perfect blacks, and have the features and wool of negroes: whereas

* The conversion of Narea and Caffa is related at great length in the Annals of Abyssinia, Vol. II. Reign of Melec Segued.—E.

all those in the high country of Narea, and still more so in the stupendous mountains of Caffa, are not so dark as Neapolitans or Sicilians. Indeed, it is said that snow has been seen to lie on the mountains of Caffa as also in that high ridge called Dyre and Tegla; but this I do not believe. Hail has probably been seen to lie there; but I doubt much whether this can be said of a substance of so loose a texture as snow.

There is great abundance both of cattle, grain, and all sorts of provisions in Narea, as well in the high as in the low country. Gold, which they sell by weight, is the medium of commerce within the country itself; but coarse cotton cloths, stibium, beads, and incense, are the articles with which their foreign trade to Angola, and the kingdoms on the Atlantic, is carried on.

The Nareans are exceedingly brave. Though they have been conquered, and driven out of the low country, it has been by multitudes—nation after nation pouring in upon them, with a number of horse, to which they are perfect strangers. Confined now to the mountains, and surrounded by their marshes and woods, they despise all further attempts of the Galla, and drive them from their frontiers whenever they approach too near them.

In these skirmishes, or in small robbing parties, those Nareans are taken, whom the Mahometan merchants sell at Gondar. At Constantinople, India, or Cairo, the women are more esteemed as slaves than those of any other part of the world, and the men are reckoned faithful, active, and intelligent. Both sexes are remarkable for a cheerful, kind disposition, and, if properly treated, soon attach themselves inviolably to their masters. The language of Narea and Caffa is peculiar to that country, and is not a dialect of any neighbouring nation.

Antonio Fernandes, in this journey, seeking to go to India by Melinda, in company with Fecur Egzie, the ambassador, passed through this country; but none of the Jesuits ever went to Narea with a view of converting the people; at which I have been often suprised. There was enough of gold and ignorance to have allured them. That softness and simplicity of manners, for which the Nareans are remarkable, their affection for their masters and superiors, and firm attachment to them, would have been great advantages in the hands of the fathers. Every Abyssinian would have encouraged them at the beginning of this mission; and, if once they had firmly established themselves in a country of so difficult access, they might have bid defiance to King Facilidas, and the persecution which in that reign destroyed the progress of the Catholic faith.

From Gonea, in six days they came to the residence of the Benero, the sovereign of the country, who, since the conquest and conversion under Melec Segued, is called Shum. The ambassador and Fernandes were received by the Benero with an air of constraint and coolness, though with civility. They afterwards found, that the cause of this was the insinuation of a schismatic Abyssinian monk, then at the court of that prince, who had told him, that the errand of the ambassador and missionary to India was to bring Portuguese troops by that way into Abyssinia, which would end in the destruction of Narea, if it did not begin with it.

Terrified at a danger so near, the Benero, called a council, in which it was resolved, that the ambassador should be turned from the direct road into the kingdom of Bali, to a much more inconvenient, longer, and dangerous one; and, the ambassador hesitating a little when this was proposed, the Benero told him

plainly, that he would not suffer him to pass further by any other way than that of Bali.

Bali was once a province belonging to Abyssinia, and was the first taken from them by the Galla. It is to the north-east of Narea, to the west of the kingdom of Adel, which separates it from the sea, and of which ample mention has been already made in the beginning of this history.

This was to turn them to Cape Gardefan, the longest journey they could possibly make by land, and in the middle of their enemies; whereas the direction of the coast of the Indian Ocean, running greatly to the westward, and toward Melinda, was the shortest journey they could make by land. Melinda, too, had many rich merchants, who, though Moors, trafficked in the Portuguese settlements on the coast of Malabar, and had little intelligence, or concern, with the religious disputes which raged in Abyssinia.

However, I very much doubt whether this nearest route could be accomplished, at least by travellers, such as Fecur Egzie, Fernandes, and their companions, all ignorant of the language, and therefore constantly at the discretion of interpreters, and the malice or private views of different people, through whose hands they must have passed.

The Benero, having thus provided against the dangers with which his state was threatened, if our travellers went by Melinda, made them a present of fifty crusades of gold for the necessaries of their journey; and, as their way lay through the small state of Gingiro, and an ambassador from the sovereign of that state was then at Narea, he dispatched that minister in great haste, recommending the Portuguese to his protection so long as they should be in his territory.

Fecur Egzie and his company set out with the ambassador of Gingiro in a direction due east; and the

first day they arrived at a post of Narea, where was the officer who was to give them a guard to the frontiers; and who, after some delay, in order to see what he could extort from them, at last gave them a party of eighty soldiers to conduct them to the frontiers.

After four long days journey through countries totally laid waste by the Galla, keeping scouts constantly before them, to give advice of the first appearance of any enemy, that they might hide themselves in thickets and bushes, at mid-day they began to descend a steep craggy ridge of mountains, when the ambassador of Gingiro, now their conductor, warned them, that, before they got to the foot of the mountain, they should enter into a very thick wood, to hide themselves till night, that they might not be discovered by the Galla shepherds, feeding their flocks in the plain below; for only at night, when they had retired, could those plains be passed in safety.

At four o'clock in the afternoon they began to enter the wood, and were lucky in getting a violent shower of rain, which dislodged the Galla sooner than ordinary, and sent them and their cattle home to their huts. But it was, at the same time, very disagreeable to our travellers, on account of its excessive coldness. Next day, in the evening, descending another very rugged chain of mountains, they came to the banks of the large river Zebee, as the Portuguese call it; but its true name is Kibbee, a name given it by the Mahometan merchants (the only travellers in this country), from its whiteness, approaching to the colour of melted butter, which that word signifies.

The river Zebee, or Kibbee, surrounds a great part of the kingdom of Gingiro. It has been mistaken for the river El Aice, which runs into Egypt in a course parallel to the Nile, but to the west of it.

Narea seems to be the highest land in the peninsula

of Africa, so that here the rivers begin to run alternately towards the Cape of Good Hope and the Mediterranean; but the descent at first is very small on either side*. In the adjoining latitudes, that is, four degrees on each side of the Line, it rains perpetually; so that these rivers, though not rapid, are yet kept continually full.

This of Zebec is universally allowed by the merchants of this country to be the head of the river Quilimancy, which, passing through such a tract of land, from Narea to near Melinda, must have opened a very considerable communication with the inland country.

This territory called Zindero, or Gingiro, is a very small one. The father and Fecur Egzie rested the sixth day from their setting out from Narea. The river Zebee, by the description of Fernandes, seems to incline from its source in a greater angle than any river on the north of that partition. He says it carries more water with it than the Nile, and is infinitely more rapid, so that it would be absolutely impassable in the season of rains, were it not for large rocks which abound in its channel.

The passage was truly tremendous; trees were laid from the shore to the next immediate rock; from that rock to the next another tree was laid; then another that reached to the shore. Those trees were so elastic as to bend with the weight of a single person. At a great distance below ran the foaming current of the river, so deep an abyss that it turned the heads of those who were passing on the moveable elastic support, or bridge, above.

Yet upon this seeming inconvenience the existence of that country depended. The Galla that surrounded it would have over-run it in a month, but for this

* This is doubtful.—E.

river, always rapid and always full, whose ordinary communication by a bridge could be destroyed in a moment; and which, though it had one ford, yet this was useless, unless passengers had assistance from both sides of the river, and consequently could never be of service to an enemy.

The terrible appearance of this tottering bridge for a time stopped the ambassador and missionary. They looked upon the passing upon these trembling beams as certainly incurring inevitable destruction. But the reflection of dangers that pressed them behind overcame these fears, and they preferred the resolution to run the risk of being drowned in the river Zebee, rather than, by staying on the other side all night, to stand the chance of being murdered by the Galla. But, after all, the men only could pass the bridge; they were obliged to leave the mules on the other side till the next morning, with instructions to their people, that, upon the first appearance of the Galla, they should leave them, and make the best of their way over the bridge, throwing down one of the trees after them. The next morning, two peasants, subjects of Gingiro, shewed them the ford, where their beasts passed over with great difficulty and danger, but without loss.

It was necessary now to acquaint the king of Gingiro of their arrival in his kingdom, and to beg to be honoured with an audience. But he happened at that time to be employed in the more important business of conjuration and witchcraft, without which this sovereign does nothing.

This kingdom of Gingiro may be fixed upon as the first on this side of Africa, where we meet with the strange practice of divining from the apparition of spirits, and from a direct communication with the devil. This is a superstition which likewise reaches

down all along the western side of this continent on the Atlantic Ocean, in the countries of Congo, Angola, and Benin. In spite of the firmest foundation in true philosophy, a traveller, who decides from the information and investigation of facts, will find it very difficult to treat these appearances as absolute fiction, or as owing to a superiority of cunning of one man in over-reaching another. For my own part, I confess I am equally at a loss to assign reasons for disbelieving the fiction on which their pretensions to some preternatural information are founded, as to account for them by the operation of ordinary causes. The king of Gingiro found eight days necessary before he could admit the ambassador and Fernandes into his presence. On the ninth, they received a permission to go to court, and they arrived there the same day.

When they came into the presence of the king, he was seated in a large gallery, open before, like what we call a balcony, which had steps from below on the outside, by which he ascended and descended at pleasure. When the letter which the ambassador carried was intimated to him, he came down from the gallery to receive it; a piece of respect which he shewed to the king of Abyssinia, though he was neither his subject nor vassal. He inquired much after the king's health, and stood a little by the ambassador and Fernandes, speaking by an interpreter. Afterwards he again returned to his balcony, sat down there, read his letter, and then corresponded with the ambassador, by messages sent from above to them below.

It is impossible to conceive from this, or any thing that Fernandes says, whether the language of Gingiro be peculiar to that country or not. The king of Gingiro read Socinios's letter, which was either in the Tigré or Arabic language. Fernandes understood the Arabic, and Fecur Egzie the Tigré and Amharic.

It is not possible, then, to know what was the language of the king of Gingiro, who read and understood Socinios's letter, but spoke to Fecur Egzie by an interpreter.

At last the king of Gingiro told them, that all contained in the king of Abyssinia's letter was, that he should use them well, give them good guard and protection while they were in his country, and further them on their journey; which he said he would execute with the greatest pleasure and punctuality.

The next day, as is usual, the ambassador and missionary carried the king's present, chints, calicoe, and other manufactures of India, things that the king esteemed most. In return to Fernandes, he sent a young girl, whom the father returned, it not being customary, as he said, for a Christian priest to have girls in his company. In exchange for the girl, the good-natured king of Gingiro sent him a slave of the other sex, and a beautiful mule. With all respect to the scruples of the father, I think it would have been fair to have kept the beautiful mule, and given the young female Gingerite to Fecur Egzie, his companion in the journey, who could have had no scruples.

Fernandes says he received the boy only from a view of saving his soul by baptism. I wonder, since Providence had thrown the girl first in his way, by what rule of charity he consigned her soul to perdition by returning her, as he was not certain at the time that he might have got a mule or camel in exchange; and then, upon his own principles, he certainly was author of the perdition of that soul, which Providence seemed to have conducted, by an extraordinary way, to the enjoyment of all the advantages of Christianity. Surely the care of Neophytes of the

female sex was not a new charge to the Jesuits in Abyssinia.

It seems ridiculous in Fernandes to imagine that the sovereign of this little state called himself Gingiro, knowing that this word signified a monkey. His enemies might give him that name; but it is not likely he would adopt it himself. And the reason of that name is still more ridiculous; for, he says, it is because the gallery is like a monkey's cage. If that was the case, all the princes in Congo and Angola give their audiences in such places. Indeed, it seems to me that it is here the customs, used in these last-mentioned parts of Africa, begin, although Gingiro is nearer the coast of the Indian Ocean than that of the Atlantic. The colour of the people at Gingiro is nearly black; still it is not the black of a negro; the features are small and straight as in Europe and Abyssinia.

All matters in this state are conducted by magic; and we may see to what point the human understanding is debased in the distance of a few leagues. Let no man say that ignorance is the cause, or heat of climate, which is the unintelligible observation generally made on these occasions. For why should heat of climate addict a people to magic more than cold? or, why should ignorance enlarge a man's powers, so that, overleaping the bounds of common intelligence, it should extend his faculty of conversing with a new set of beings in another world? The Ethiopians, who nearly surround Abyssinia, are blacker than those of Gingiro, their country hotter, and are, like them, an indigenous people, that have been, from the beginning, in the same part where they now inhabit. Yet, the former neither adore the devil, nor pretend to have a communication with him: they have no human sacrifices, nor are there any traces of such enormities

having prevailed among them. A communication with the sea has been always open, and the slave-trade prevalent from the earliest times; while the king of Gingiro, shut up in the heart of the continent, sacrifices those slaves to the devil which he has no opportunity to sell to man. For at Gingiro begins that accursed custom of making the shedding of human blood a necessary part in all solemnities. How far to the southward this reaches, I do not know; but I look upon this to be the geographical bounds of the reign of the devil, on the north side of the equator in the peninsula of Africa*.

This kingdom is hereditary in one family, but does not descend in course to the eldest son, the election

* This reasoning is greatly illustrated by the writings of other travellers, who have treated of the African negroes, either in their own country, or in the West Indies. It is part of the native religion of these savages to acknowledge a good and evil principle in nature, and sometimes a plurality of both. These malignant spirits, or gins, as they are called by the Arabs, are supposed to be the cause of natural and moral evil; that is, they produce diseases, hurricanes, and misfortunes in war, &c. which renders them objects of terror, and, therefore, more necessary to be appeased than the good. To them the African chiefs offer what they consider as appropriate sacrifices, the captives taken in war, or any other victims which they suppose to be acceptable. Magic is closely connected with this superstition; for the gins are accounted capable of being pleased or controuled by certain obi, or preparations, like those of the witches in Shakespeare's Macbeth. The Arab tribes, the parents of the Abyssinians, were never so much addicted to these cruel sacrifices as the negroes; but it does not follow that they never used them. On the contrary, the orgies of Moloch, Chemos, and Baal, are well known. It was customary to immolate an enemy who had killed a man of the conqueror's tribe, to the Hamah or ghost of that person. This was thought to wander in the form of a bird, which they supposed to be formed from the blood about the brain, about the grave, screaming in a lamentable manner, "sakuni! sakuni! Give me, give me drink!" Vide Poc. Spec. Hist. Arab. p. 135.—E.

of the particular prince being in the nobles; and thus far, indeed, it seems to resemble that of their neighbours in Abyssinia.

When the king of Gingiro dies, the body of the deceased is wrapped in a fine cloth, and a cow is killed. They then put the body so wrapped up into the cow's skin. As soon as this is over, all the princes of the royal family fly and hide themselves in the bushes; while others, intrusted with the election, enter into the thickets, beating everywhere about as if looking for game. At last, a bird of prey called in their country Liber, appears, and hovers over the person destined to be king, crying, and making a great noise, without quitting his station. By this means the person destined to be elected is found, surrounded, as is reported, by tygers, lions, panthers, and such like wild beasts. This is imagined to be done by magic, or the devil, else there are everywhere enough of these beasts lying in the cover to furnish materials for such a tale, without having recourse to the power of magic to assemble them.

As they find their king, then, like a wild beast, so his behaviour continues the same after he is found. He flies upon them with great rage, resisting to the last, wounding and killing all he can reach without any consideration, till, overcome by force, he is dragged to a throne, which he fills in a manner perfectly corresponding to the rationality of the ceremonies of his instalment.

Although there are many that have a right to seek after this king, yet, when he is discovered, it does not follow, that the same person who finds him should carry him to his coronation; for there is a family, who have a right to dispute this honour with the first possessor; and, therefore, in his way from the wood, they set upon the people in whose hands

he is, and a battle ensues, where several are killed or wounded; and if these last, by force, can take him out of the hands of the first finder, they enjoy all the honours due to him that made him king.

Before he enters his palace, two men are to be slain; one at the foot of the tree by which his house is chiefly supported; the other at the threshold of his door, which is besmeared with the blood of the victim. And, it is said (I have heard this often in Abyssinia from people coming from that country), that the particular family, whose privilege it is to be slaughtered, so far from avoiding it, glory in the occasion, and offer themselves willingly to meet it.—To return to our travellers.

The father and the ambassador, leaving the kingdom of Gingiro, proceeded in a direction due east, and entered the kingdom of Cambat, depending still on the empire of Abyssinia, and there halted at Sangara, which seems to be the principal place of the province, governed at that time by a Moor called Amelmal.

On the left of Cambat are the Guragues, who live in some beggarly villages, but mostly in caves and holes in the mountains. The father was detained two days at Sangara, at the persuasion of the inhabitants there, who told him there was a fair in the neighbourhood, and people would pass in numbers to accompany him, so that there would be no danger. But, after staying that time at Sangara, he found that the intention of this delay was only to give time to some horsemen of the Guragues to assemble, in order to attack the caravan on the road, which they did soon after; and, though they were repulsed, yet it was with the loss of one of the company, a young man related to Socinios, who, being wounded with a poisoned arrow, died some days after.

In the mean time, an Abyssinian, called Manquer, overtook their caravan. As he was a schismatic, his intention was very well known to be that of disappointing their journey; and he prevailed with Amelmal so far as to make him suspect that the recommendations which the ambassador brought were false. He, therefore, insisted on the ambassador's staying there till he should get news from court. Amelmal, Manquer, and the ambassador, each dispatched a messenger, who tarried three months on the road, and at last brought orders from the king to dispatch them immediately.

As Amelmal now saw the bad inclination of Manquer, he detained him at Cambat that he might occasion no more difficulties in their way. He gave the ambassador likewise seven horses, which were said to be the best presents to the princes or governors that were in his road, and dispatched the travellers with another companion, Baharo, who had brought the letters from the king.

From Cambat they entered the small territory of Alaba, independent of the king of Abyssinia, whose governor was called Aliko, a Moor. This man, already prejudiced against the missionary and the ambassador, was still hesitating whether to allow them to proceed, when Manquer, who fled from Amelmal, arrived. Aliko, hearing from this incendiary, that the father's errand was to bring Portuguese that way from India to destroy the Mahometan faith, as in former times, burst into such violent rage as to threaten the father, and all with him, with death, which nothing but the reality of the king's letters, of which he had got assurance from Baharo, and some regard to the law of nations, on account of the ambassador Fecur Egzie, could have prevented. In the mean time, he put them all in close prison, where several of the

Portuguese died. At last, after a council held, in which Manquer gave his voice for putting them to death, a man of superior character in that country advised the sending them back to Amelmal, the way that they came; and this measure was accordingly adopted.

They returned, therefore, from Cambat, and thence to Gorgora, without any sort of advantage to themselves, or to us, only what arises from that opportunity of rectifying the geography of the country through which they passed; and even for this they have furnished but very scanty materials, in comparison of what we might reasonably have expected, without having occasioned any additional fatigue to themselves.

We have already said, that though Socinios had not openly declared his resolution of embracing the Catholic faith, yet he had gone so far as to declare, upon the dispute held between the Catholic and schismatic clergy, in his own presence and that of the Abuna, that the Abyssinian disputants were vanquished, and ought to have been convinced from the authority of their own books, especially that of Haimanout Abou, the faith of the ancient fathers and doctors of their church, received by them from the beginning as the undoubted rule of faith: That the doctrine of the Catholic church being only what was taught in the Haimanout Abou concerning the two natures in Christ, this point was to all intents and purposes settled; and, therefore, he signified it his will, that, for the future, no one should deny that there are two natures in Christ, distinct in themselves, but divinely united in one person, which was Christ; declaring at the same time, that in case any person should hereafter deny, or call this in doubt, he would chastise him for seven years.

The Abuna, on the contrary, supported by the half-brother of the king, Emana Christos (brother to Ras Sela Christos), published a sentence of excommunication, by affixing it to the door of one of the churches belonging to the palace, in which he declared all persons accursed who should maintain two natures in Christ, or embrace or vindicate any of the errors of the church of Rome.

The king had received various complaints of the Agows, who had abused his officers, and refused payment of tribute. He had set out upon an expedition against them, intending to winter in that country; but, hearing of the rash conduct of the Abuna, and the leagues that were in consequence everywhere forming against him, he returned to Gorgora, and sent word to the Abuna, that unless, without delay, he recalled the excommunication he had published, he should be forthwith punished with the loss of his head. This language was too clear and explicit to admit a doubt of its meaning; and the Abuna, giving way for the time, recalled his excommunication.

A conspiracy was next formed by Emana Christos, the eunuch Kefla Wahad, master of the household to the king, and Julius, governor of Tigré, to murder Socinios in his palace; for which purpose they desired an audience upon weighty affairs, which, being granted by the king, the three conspirators were admitted into his presence.

It was concerted that Julius should present a petition of such a nature as probably to produce a refusal; and, in the time of the altercation that would ensue, when the king might be off his guard, the other two were to stab him.

Just before the conversation began, he was advised of his danger by a page, and Julius, presenting his petition, the king granted it immediately, before Emana

Christos could come up to assist in the dispute which they expected; and this conspirator appearing in the instant, the king, who had got up to walk, invited them all three up to the terrace. This was the most favourable opportunity they could have wished; they, therefore deferred assaulting him till they should have got up to the terrace. The king entered the door of the private stair, and drew it hastily after him. It had a spring-lock made by Peter Paez, which was fixed in the inside, and could not be opened from without, so that the king was left secure upon the terrace. Upon this the conspirators, fearing themselves discovered, retired, and from that time resolved to keep out of the king's power.

At that period, Socinios had determined upon an expedition against the Funge, that is, against the blacks of Sennaar, who had entered his country in a violent manner, destroying his people, and carrying them off as slaves. It was therefore concerted, that while the king was busied far off with the Funge, Emana Christos, Julius, and the eunuch Kefla, at once should attack Sela Christos, at whom, next to the king, the conspirators chiefly aimed; and the cause was, that the king had taken the posts of Ras and the government of Gojam from Emana Christos, who was a schismatic, and had given them to his younger brother, Sela Christos, a violent Catholic.

Julius began by a proclamation in Woggora, in which he commanded, that those who believed two natures in Christ should immediately leave the province, and that all those who were friends to the Alexandrian faith should forthwith repair to him, and fight in defence of it. He then ordered the goods of all the Catholics in Tigré to be confiscated, and straightway marched to surprise Sela Christos, then in Gojam. But the king received intelligence of his de-

signs, and returned into Dembea before it was well known that he had left it. This, at first, very much disconcerted Julius; and the rather, that Emana Christos and Kefla Wahad kept aloof, and had not declared themselves openly yet, nor did they seem inclined to do it, till Julius had first tried his fortune with the king.

This rebel, now full of presumption, advanced with his army to where the Nile issues out of the lake Tzana; and there he found the Abuna Simon, who had staid for some weeks in one of the islands upon pretence of devotion. Simon, after having confirmed Julius in his resolution of murdering the king, his father-in-law, or of dying in defence of the Alexandrian faith, if necessary, persuaded him to lay aside his design of marching against Sela Christos, but rather immediately to return back and surprise the king before these two joined.

Julius readily adopted this advice of the Abuna; while that priest, to shew he was sincere, offered to accompany him in person, and share his fortune. This was accepted with pleasure by Julius, who next morning received the Abuna's benediction at the head of his army, and assisted at a solemn excommunication pronounced against the king, Sela Christos, the fathers, and all the Catholics at court.

The king's first thought, upon hearing these proceedings, was to send some troops to the assistance of Sela Christos, warning him of his danger; but, upon hearing measures were changed, and that the first design was against himself, he marched to meet Julius, and sent a message to Sela Christos to join him with all possible speed; and, as he was an excellent general, he took his post so judiciously, that he could not be forced to fight against his will, till succour was

brought him, without great disadvantage to the enemy.

Julius, fearing the junction of Sela Christos, endeavoured to fight the two armies separately. For which purpose he advanced and pitched his camp close within sight of that of Socinios, resolving to force him to an engagement. This was thought a very dangerous measure, and was contrary to the advice of all his friends, who saw how judiciously Socinios had chosen his ground; and it was known to the meanest soldier on both sides, how consummate the king was in the art of war.

But the Abuna having persuaded him, that, as soon as the soldiers should see him, they would abandon the king, and join his colours, early in the morning he put on his coat of mail, and, mounted on a strong and fiery horse, was proceeding to the king's camp, when Malacotawit, his wife (daughter to Socinios), persuaded him at least to take some food to enable him to bear the fatigues of the day. But disdaining such advice, he only answered furiously, "That he had sworn not to taste meat till he had brought her her father's head;" and, without longer waiting for the rest of his troops, he leaped over the enemy's lines in a quarter where the Abuna had promised he should be well received.

Indeed, on his first appearance, no one there opposed his passage, but seemed rather inclined to favour him, as the Abuna had promised: And he had now advanced near to a body of Tigré soldiers, that were the guard of the king's tent, loudly crying, "Where is your emperor?" when one of these, with a stone, struck him so rudely upon the forehead, that it felled him to the ground; and, being now known, another soldier, called Amda, thrust him through with a

sword, and thereafter killed him with many wounds. His head was cut off and carried to Socinios.

The few that attended him perished likewise among the soldiers. Nor did any of Julius's army think of a battle, but all sought their safety in flight. The king's troops being all fresh, pursued the scattered rebels with great vigour, and many were slain, without any loss on the part of the royalists.

The Abuna Simon had, for a considerable time, stood as an ecclesiastic, unhurt and unheeded, among the flying troops. Being at last distinguished by his violent vociferation, and repeated imprecations upon the king and the conquerors, he was slain by a common soldier, who cut his head off, and carried it to Socinios, who ordered it, with the body, to be taken from the field of battle, and buried in a church-yard.

Socinios gave the spoil of the camp to his soldiers. It was said, that no time, since the Turks were defeated under Mahomet Gragne, was there ever so much treasure found in a camp. The pride of Julius induced him to carry all his riches with him. They were the fruits of avarice and oppression in all the principal posts of the empire, which in their turn he had enjoyed. They were likewise the spoils of the Catholics, newly acquired by the confiscations made since his rebellion. A great number of cattle was also taken, which the king distributed among the priests of the several churches, the judges, and other lay officers. Very great rejoicings were made everywhere; in the midst of which arrived Ras Sela Christos, with his army from Gojam, and was struck with astonishment on seeing the small number of troops with which the king had been exposed to fight Julius, and how complete a victory he had gained with them.

In the meantime, Emana Christos had retired to a high mountain in Gojam, called Melca Amba, where

he continued to excite the people of that province to rebel and join Julius, whose arrival he daily expected, that, together, they might fight Sela Christos. But the rashness of Julius, and the march of Sela Christos to the king's assistance, had very much disconcerted their whole scheme.

Af Christos, who commanded in Gojam after the departure of Ras Sela Christos, sent to Melca Amba, reproaching Emana Christos with seditious practices; upbraiding him with the unnatural part he acted, being a brother-german to Sela Christos, and brother to Socinios by the same mother, while Julius was married to his daughter, and had constantly enjoyed the great places of the empire. He asked him, What they could be more? Kings they could not be, neither he nor Julius. Ras, the next place in the empire, they both had enjoyed; and, if the king had taken that office lately from Emana Christos, he had not given it to a stranger, but to his brother Sela Christos, who, it was but fair, should have his turn; and that the importance of his family was not the less increased by it. Lastly, he represented the danger he ran, if Julius made his peace, of falling a sacrifice, as the adviser of the rebellion.

Emana Christos answered, That though he rebelled with Julius, and at the same time, yet it was not as a follower of Julius, nor against the king; but that he took up arms in defence of the ancient faith of his country, which was now, without reason, trodden under foot, in favour of a religion, which was a false one if they understood it, and an usless one if they did not. He said he was satisfied of his own danger; but neither his connection with the king, nor his being related to Sela Christos, could weigh with him against his duty to God and his country. The king and his brother might be right in embracing the

Romish religion, because they were convinced of the truth of it: he had used, however, the same means, and the same application, had heard the arguments of the same fathers, which, unluckily for him, had convinced him their religion was not a true, but a false one. For the same reasons he continued to be an Alexandrian, which his brother alleged had made him a Roman. He, therefore, begged Af Christos to consider, by a review of things since David III.'s time, how much blood the change would cost to the kingdom by the attempt, whether it succeeded or not; and whether, after that consideration, it was worth trying the experiment.

This artful and sensible message, sent by a man of the capacity and experience of Emana Christos, easily convinced Af Christos, that it was not by argument Emana Christos was to be brought to his duty; but, like a good officer, he kept up correspondence with him, that he might be master of the intelligence to what place he had retired.

Soon after Sela Christos had left Gojam to join the king, by forced marches, he surrounded Melca Araba, where Emana Christos was, and had assembled a number of troops to descend into the plain, and create a diversion in favour of Julius. The mountain had neither water in it nor food for such a number of men, nor had Emana Christos forces enough to risk a battle with an officer of the known experience of Af Christos, who had chosen the ground at his full leisure, and with complete knowledge of it.

Three days the army within the mountain held out without complaining; but, in the evening of the third day, some monks and hermits *(holy men*, the abettors of this rebellion) came to Af Christos to remonstrate, that there were several convents and villages in the mountain, also small springs, and barley enough to

answer the necessities of the ordinary inhabitants, but were not enough for such an additional number, which had taken forcible possession of the wells, and drank up all the water, to the immediate danger of the whole inhabitants perishing with thirst.

To this Af Christos answered, That the reducing the mountain, and the taking Emana Christos, was what was given him in commission by the king, to attain which end he could carefully improve all the means in his power. He was sorry, indeed, for the distress of the convents in the mountain, but could not help it; nor would he suffer one of them to remove or come down into the plain, nor would he discontinue blockading the mountain, while Emana Christos was there and alive. No other alternative, therefore, remained but the delivering up of Emana Christos. His army would have fought for him against a common enemy, but against thirst their shields and swords were useless.

Af Christos, with his prisoner, forthwith proceeded to join the king, and passed the Nile into Begemder. At crossing the river Bashilo, they were informed of the defeat and death of Julius and the Abuna. The messenger had also letters for Emana Christos, whom the king did not yet know to be prisoner: among these was one from Sela Christos, in which he upbraided his brother with his unnatural treason, and assured him speedily of a fate like that of Julius. Emana Christos received this intelligence almost dead with fear; for never was a prophecy made which seemed to have needed less time to accomplish than this of his brother's.

Af Christos surrendered his prisoner to the king at Dancaz, who immediately assembled a full convocation of judges of all degrees; and the prisoner being ordered to answer to his charge concerning the rebel-

lion of Julius and his conspiracy against the king's life, he took the part he had been advised, and palliated the whole of his actions, without positively denying any one of them, and submitted to the king's mercy. The judges, considering the defence, unanimously found him guilty of death; but the king, whose last vote, when sitting in judgment, supersedes and overturns all the rest, reprieved, and sent him prisoner to Amhara.

Hitherto the king had contented himself with fixing two points in favour of the Roman church, in contradiction to that of Alexandria. The first denounced punishment to every one who did not believe that there are two natures in Christ, and that he is perfect God and perfect man, without confusion of persons. The second was rather a point of discipline than of faith; yet it was urged as such, by declaring it to be unlawful to observe Saturday, the ancient Jewish sabbath. The first of these, if it was not the cause, had been assumed as the pretext for the rebellion of Julius. The second produced that of Jonael, governor of Begemder, of which we are now to speak. But thus far only the king had gone. He had not openly joined the church of Rome, nor as yet renounced that of Alexandria, nor forced any one else to do so.

The first prelude to Jonael's rebellion was an anonymous letter written to the king, in which all the stale and lame arguments of the Alexandrians were raked together, and stated with a degree of presumption worthy of the ignorance and obstinacy of those from whom they came. This, though ridiculous, and below notice in point of argument, offended greatly both the king and the Jesuits, by the asperity of its terms, and the personal applications contained in it. The king was treated as another Dioclesian, thirsting after Christian blood, and for this devoted to hell:

as were also the Jesuits, whom they called relations of Pilate, in allusion to their origin from Rome.

The king, grievously offended, added this injunction to the former proclamation, "That all out-door work, such as plowing and sowing, should be publicly followed by the husbandman on the Saturday, under penalty of paying a web of cotton cloth for the first omission; and the second offence was to be punished by a confiscation of moveables, and the crime not to be pardoned for seven years;"—the greatest punishment for misdemeanors in Abyssinia. To this Socinios added, *viva voce*, from his throne, that he never abolished, but explained and established their religion, which always taught, as their own books could testify, that Christ was perfect God and perfect man, two distinct natures united in one hypostasis of the eternal word; neither was it in compliance with the Jesuits that he abrogated the observation of the Jewish sabbath, but in obedience to the council of Chalcedon, which was founded in the holy scriptures, for which he was ready at all times to lose his life, though he should endeavour first to inflict that punishment on such as were its enemies.

In order to shew that he did not mean to trifle, he ordered the tongue of a monk (called Abba Af Christos) to be cut out, for denying the two natures in Christ; and Buco-Damo, one of the principal generals of his court (who afterwards died a zealous Catholic), he ordered to be beaten with rods, and degraded from his employment, for observing the Jewish Sabbath.

The king, having given these public, unequivocal testimonies of his resolution, put himself at the head of his army, and marched against Jonael; but that rebel, not daring to meet his offended sovereign, retired into the mountains; whereupon the king laid

waste the country of the Galla, who had protected him. This occasioned a division among the Galla themselves. One party, declaring for the king, apprehended Jonael with intention to deliver him up; but he was soon rescued out of their hands by the contrary party, enemies to Socinios. His protectors being once known, the manner of working his destruction was soon known likewise. The king's presents made their way to that faithless people; the only barbarians with whom the right of hospitality is not established. Upon receiving the king's bribe, they murdered Jonael, cut his head off, and sent it to the king.

The rebellion in Damot was not so easily quelled. Sela Christos, a zealous Catholic, was sent against the rebels to inforce the proclamation with regard to the sabbath. But as his connections were very considerable among them, he chose first to endeavour, by fair means, to induce the ignorant savages to return to reason and obedience. With this view, he sent to expostulate with them; and to beg that, in articles of faith, they would suffer themselves to be examined and instructed by men of learning and good life; not by those monks, ignorant like themselves, from whom they could only learn vice, blasphemy, and rebellion. To this the Damots answered, as one man, That, if his friendship for them and good intentions were real, he should give them, for proof, the immediate burning of all the Latin books which had been translated into the Ethiopian language, and that, then, he should hang those Jesuits who were with him upon a high tree.

We are not, however, to consider this was really from a conviction or persuasion of the Damots, who inhabit a province bordering upon the Agows and Gongas, and whose Christianity is much upon a par with

that of either of these nations. But the fact was, that the fanatics and zealots for the Alexandrian faith had retired in great numbers to Damot, as to a province the worst affected to the king, from the recent violence of Julius, who, in an expedition against the Shangalla, by order of the king, had driven off the cattle of the peaceable Damots, who had been then guilty of no offence. And as these were ready to rebel for a quarrel merely their own, it was very easy for the schismatical monks to add this religious grievance to the sum of the preceding.

Sela Christos had with him about 7000 men, most of them Catholics and veteran soldiers; and among these, 40 Portuguese, partly on foot, armed with muskets, the others on horseback, clad in coats of mail. Very different was the army of the Damots. They were superior in number, for they exceeded 12,000 men, and among these were 400 monks, well armed with swords, lances, and shields, earnestly bent upon obtaining a crown of martyrdom in defence of their religion, from the innovation proposed by Socinios. At the head of these was a fanatical monk (one Batacu), who promised them armies of angels, with flaming swords, who should slay their enemies, but render them invulnerable, as he declared himself to be, either by sword or lance.

The battle was fought at the foot of the mountains of Amid Amid, on the 6th of October 1620. Sela Christos, sure of victory, and unwilling to slaughter a people he had been used to protect, began first to shew his superiority in slight skirmishes. After which, desiring a parley, he sent messengers to them, begging them to consider their own danger, and offering them a general amnesty upon their submission. These messengers were not allowed to approach, for showers of arrows were poured upon them; so the battle

began with great animosity on both sides. The Damots were soon broken and put to flight by the superiority of Sela Christos's soldiers. But the 400 monks, already mentioned, fought most desperately in defiance of numbers, nor did they seek their safety by a flight. One hundred and eighty of them were killed on the place they occupied, valiantly fighting to the very last. A rare example, and seldom found in history, that fanatics like these, always ready to rebel, should persist, and sacrifice their lives to the follies of their own preaching.

As for their celestial auxiliaries, whose assistance they were promised, as far as could be discovered, they neither did harm nor good. We may suppose they stood neuter. But Batacu the hermit, ringleader of this sedition, whose body was so miraculously armed, that neither sword nor spear could make any impression upon it, was unfortunately thrust through with a lance in the very beginning of the engagement, which greatly served to discredit these supernatural aids.

It was in this year, 1620, that Socinios marched into Begemder against Jonael. At that time Peter Paez was employed at Gorgora in building the church there. The king returned immediately to Dancaz after the defeat of Jonael, and passed his winter at that place.

It was on the 16th of January 1621, that the dedication of the church of Gorgora was made by Peter Paez; and at that time the king was in Begemder. Upon his return to Dancaz he met Paez at Gorgora for the first time. He remained at Gorgora till the 3d of October of that year, when the news of the defeat of the Damots by Sela Christos arrived, which he received in presence of that priest at Gorgora. In this, both the Jesuits and Abyssinian annals agree. It is not then possible that Peter Paez could have been

with the king at Sacala, or Geesh, in the country of the Agows, on the 21st of March 1621 *; for both Peter Paez and Socinios were at that time in Gorgora.

At this time the Ethiopic memoirs of Socinios's reign interrupt their continual topics of rebellion and bloodshed, to record a very trifling anecdote; which, however, I insert, as it serves to give some idea of the simplicity and ignorance of the times.

The historian says, that this year there was brought into Abyssinia, a bird called Para, which was about the bigness of a hen, and spoke all languages; Indian, Portuguese, and Arabic. It named the king's name: although its voice was that of a man, it could likewise neigh like a horse, and mew like a cat, but did not sing like a bird. It was produced before the assembly of judges, of the priests, and the azages of court, and there it spoke with great gravity. The assembly, after considering circumstances well, were unanimously of opinion, that the evil spirit had no part in endowing it with these talents. But to be certain of this, it was thought most prudent to take the advice of Ras Sela Christos, then in Gojam, who might, if he thought fit, consult the superior of Mahebar Selasse. To them it was sent, but it died on the road. The historian closes his narrative by this wise reflection on the parrot's death; "Such is the lot of all flesh."

The king, immediately after his victory over Jonael, had resolved to throw off the mask, and openly to profess the Catholic religion. The success of Sela Christos against the Damots had confirmed him. He had passed the rainy season, as I have before observed, between Gorgora and Dancaz; and, in the usual time, in the month of November, marched to Fog-

* This will be more enlarged upon hereafter.

gora, a narrow stripe of plain country, reaching from Emfras to Dara, bounded on one side by the lake Dembea, and on the other by the mountains of Begemder.

For this purpose, he sent to Peter Paez, his ordinary confessor, to come to him; and, having told him his resolution, he declared, that, in proof of the sincerity of his conversion, he had put away all his wives (of whom he had several of the first quality, and many children by them), and retained only his first, by whom he had the eldest of his sons, destined to succeed him in the empire.

Paez, having received his confession, and public renunciation of the Alexandrian faith, returned to Gorgora, singing his *nunc dimittis*, as if the great end of his mission was now completed; nor was he deceived in his prognostication. For, having too much heated himself with zeal in travelling, he was, upon his arrival, taken with a violent fever; and, though every sort of remedy was administered to him by Antonio Fernandes, yet he died on the third of May, 1623, with great demonstrations of piety, resignation, and firm conviction, that he had done his duty in an active, innocent, and well-spent life.

He had been seven years a captive in Arabia, in the hands of the Moors, and nineteen years missionary in Abyssinia, in the worst of times, and had always extricated himself from the most perilous situations, with honour to himself, and advantage to his religion. In person, he was very tall and strong; but lean from continual labour and abstinence. He was red-faced; which, Tellez says, proceeded from the religious warmth of his heart. He had a very good understanding, which he had cultivated, every hour of his life, by study or practice.

Besides possessing universal knowledge in scholastic divinity, and the books belonging to his profession,

he understood Greek, Latin, and Arabic well, was a good mathematician, an excellent mechanic, wrought always with his own hands, and in building was at once a careful active labourer, and an architect of refined taste and judgment. He was, by his own study and industry, painter, mason, carver, carpenter, smith, farrier, quarrier, and was able to build convents and palaces, and furnish them, without calling one workman to his assistance; and in this manner he is said to have furnished the convent at Collela, as also the palace and convent at Gorgora.

With all these accomplishments, he was so affable, compassionate, and humble in his nature, that he never had an opportunity of conversing, even with heretics, without leaving them his friends. He was remarkably cheerful in his temper; and the most forward always in promoting innocent mirth, of that puerile species, which we in England call *fun*, in great request among the young men in Abyssinia, who spend much of their time in this sort of conversation, whether in the city or the camp. Above all, he was a patient, diligent instructor of youth; and the greatest part of his disciples died in the persecution that soon followed, resolutely maintaining the truths of that religion their preceptor first had taught them. In a word, he was the hinge upon which the Catholic religion turned. He had found the seeds of it sown in the country for a hundred years before his time, which had borne little fruit, and was then apparently on the decline. Nineteen years of this most active missionary, and the death of three kings, had advanced it only so far as to be embraced publicly by one of them; after Paez's death, in six years it fell, though supported most strenuously by a king prodigal of the blood of his subjects in this cause, by a patriarch sent from Rome, and by above twenty very zealous and active missionaries; and, as far as my foresight can carry

me, it is so entirely fallen, that, unless by a special miracle of Providence wrought for that purpose, it never will rise again.

The king's renunciation of the Alexandrian faith was followed by a very strong, or rather violent manifesto; and we need not be at a loss to guess whom he employed to draw it up. It begins by asserting the supremacy of the church of Rome, as the see of St Peter; it mentions the three first general councils, which condemned Arius, Macedonius, and Nestorius; next quotes the council of Chalcedon, as the fourth general council, and as having justly condemned Dioscurus; but says not a word of the council of Ephesus, which the Abyssinians receive instead of that of Chalcedon; insists largely upon the two natures in Christ; then, leaving the patriarchs of Alexandria, it attacks not the doctrines, but the morals of the Abunas, sent from Alexandria into Abyssinia; accuses the ecclesiastics in general of Simony, and paying money to the Abuna for their ordination (a well-founded part of the charge), which I fear continues to this day.

The Abuna Marcus was, it is there said, convicted by Socinios, or Melec Segued, of a crime of such turpitude, that the name of it should never stain paper. He was degraded, and banished to the island of Dek. His successor, Christodulus, had many concubines. Abuna Petros, who succeeded, took the wife of a poor Egyptian, and lived with her; he then excommunicated his sovereign, Jacob, after he had reigned seven years; and died in battle, in the actual commission of treason, fighting against the prince.

Simon, the last Abuna, besides living in adultery with the wife of an Egyptian called Matti, kept several young women with him as concubines; and being detected in having a daughter by one of them, with a view to conceal it, he caused the child to be exposed

to be devoured by the hyæna. After living in constant disobedience to God's law, he joined the crime of rebellion to the repeated breach of every command in the decalogue; and appearing in battle, and excommunicating his sovereign, God (says the manifesto) delivered him into our victorious hands, and he was slain by a common soldier in the very commission of his crime.

It must be owned, we cannot have a worse picture of any Christian church, than that given here of the church of Alexandria. Charity should induce us to hope some exaggeration had crept into it. Yet when we consider, that the facts mentioned were all within the space of forty years, and, consequently, must have been within the knowledge, not only of Socinios, but of many people then alive, and at court, we cannot, with the impartiality of an historian, deny our apprehensions, that these charges were but too well-founded.

However this may be, neither the king's example, nor his manifesto, had the effect he desired. A rebel, whom the annals call Welled Gabriel, declared himself against the king in Amhara, just at the time that Socinios, misled by the enemies of Sela Christos, had begun to entertain suspicion of his loyalty, and had deprived him of the government of Gojam and the Agows. Finding, after an examination, there was no person that was qualified to bring this affair to a happy issue but Sela Christos, he replaced him in his government of Gojam, giving him, at the same time, orders to march against Welled Gabriel into Amhara.

This command of the king, Ras Sela Christos soon complied with; and, upon his first appearance in that province, the rebel retired to a high mountain, which he made his place of arms, the top producing both

provisions and water sufficient to maintain a large garrison.

The Ras, seeing that force availed nothing, had recourse to the usual trap these rebels fall into. Weary of confinement on the mountain, sensible that he was by himself too weak to leave it, while such an enemy expected him below, he accepted the friendship of the neighbouring Galla, who offered to join him in such numbers, as to enable him to descend from the mountain, and try his fortune in a battle. The treaty was concluded, and the junction no sooner effected, than the faithless Galla, before gained by the Ras, fell upon Welled Gabriel with their clubs, and killed him on the spot, having so mangled his body, that scarce a piece was reserved to send to his enemy.

The joy this victory occasioned at court met with a great addition, by the arrival of the Romish patriarch. It has been before observed, that the king had himself wrote letters to the pope and king of Spain, declaring his intentions to turn Catholic. Peter Paez, Antonio Fernandes, and the other priests, had given a much more favourable prospect of religious affairs, than had as yet been conveyed to Rome; the wiser part of the conclave, however, had doubted. But now, as the king had voluntarily made his recantation, it was no longer thought time for delay; and, accordingly, Alphonso Mendez, a Jesuit doctor of divinity, a man of great learning, by birth a Portuguese, was ordained at Lisbon the 25th of May 1624.

From thence he proceeded to India by the way of Goa attended by several fresh missionaries; and finding there letters from Socinios, and a passport from the king of Dancali, a Mahometan prince in alliance with the Abyssinians, he arrived at Bilur, an open bay in the small and barren state of Dancali, on the 2d of May 1625, and was received, by the brother of the

reigning prince, with every token of friendship that so poor a state and sovereign could afford. The king of Dancali himself was at the distance of six days journey, in a place where there was greater plenty of water and provisions. The following day the king sent four mules for the fathers to join him, and received them in a room of a round figure, surrounded and covered with bundles of straw, but so low they scarce could raise themselves after having made their bows.

In this miserable kingdom, which I shall not describe, as, since that period, it has been conquered by the Galla, the patriarch and fathers staid, almost in want of necessaries, for sixteen days. At last they set out, having, with much difficulty, mustered sufficient beasts of burden to carry their baggage. The road lay through part of the country wherein are the mines of fossil-salt, hot, barren, absolutely without water, and exposed greatly to the incursions of the Galla. After two days journey, they arrived, on the morning of the third, at the foot of Senaffé, where there was water. It is the frontier (as the name imports) of the province of Enderta, now united to the government of Tigré. It is part of that ridge of mountains which separates the seasons, occasioning summer on the one side, while rain and cold prevail on the other.

On the night before they came to the mountain, while dubious of their way, a star of more than ordinary magnitude, and of surprising brightness, appeared over the patriarch, giving so strong a light, that it illuminated the heavens down to the horizon. It was not, in its place or manner of appearing, like a common star, but stood stationary, in the way leading to Senaffé, for above six minutes, and disappeared *.

* Tellez, lib. iv. cap. 38.

This star, the patriarch and his followers modestly say, was probably the same that conducted the Magi to the cradle of Christ, and was now sent to shew them the way into Abyssinia.

While they were at the foot of this mountain, the muleteers, all Mahometans, thought the occasion a proper one to plunder them, by obliging them to pay an additional hire for their beasts, which they pretended were not able to ascend so steep a mountain. The camels certainly could not pass; but mules and asses have a more praticable road, for the sake of carrying the salt. They insisted to leave the company till they should bring them fresh mules. The caravan consisted of the patriarch and six ecclesiastics, priests, and friars, and thirteen laymen, three of whom were musicians. It was very probable their intention was to have sent to them people, who would very soon have put a fatal period to the mission, had not Emanuel Baradas, with a number of the Abyssinians and officers, and plenty of all things necessary, joined the patriarch on the 16th of June 1625; while their late conductors, conscious of misbehaviour, fled without seeking their hire.

In five days they came to Fremona, where they staid till November; and, in December, arrived at Gorgora, where they were introduced to the king in his palace. Socinios ordered the patriarch to be placed on a seat equal in height to his own, on his right hand; and at that very audience, on the 11th of February 1626, it was settled, that the king should take an oath of submission to the see of Rome.

This useless, vain, ridiculous ceremony, was accordingly celebrated on the 11th of February, with all the pageantry of a heathen festival of triumph. The palace was adorned with all the pomp and vanity that the church of Rome, and especially that part of it,

the Order of the Jesuits, had solemnly abjured. The patriarch, as a mark of his superiority over the Abunas, preached a sermon, in the Portuguese language, upon the primacy of the chair of St Peter, full of Latin quotations; which is said to have had a wonderful effect upon the king and Sela Christos, neither of whom understood one word either of Latin or Portuguese.

That part of the patriarch's discourse, which was applicable to Socinios's conversion, was answered by Melca Christos, governor of Samen (himself a schismatic), in the language of Amhara, which neither the patriarch nor his retinue understood, and concluded with these words, "That as the king thought himself obliged to fulfil those promises, of submitting to the see of Rome, which his predecessors had made, the time was now come in which he should do that, if such was his pleasure." These last words of the orator seem not to have satisfied the zeal of Socinios. He interrupted Melca Christos, by saying, that it was not now, but a long time since, that he had submitted to the church of Rome, as true successor of St Peter; and the present occasion was only a confirmation of what he had formerly professed.

The patriarch answered by a few words, prudently and sensibly, I suppose to save time, seeing that, short or long, his discourse would not be understood. But proceeding to facts, he opened a New Testament, while Socinios, upon his knees, took the following oath: "We, Sultan Segued, emperor of Ethiopia, do believe and confess, that St Peter, prince of the apostles, was constituted, by Christ our Lord, head of the whole Christian church; and that he gave him the principality and dominion over the whole world, by saying to him, *You are Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church; and I will give you the keys of the*

kingdom of heaven. And, again, when he said, *Keep my sheep.* Also we believe and confess, that the pope of Rome, lawfully elected, is the true successor of St Peter the apostle, in government; that he holdeth the same power, dignity, and primacy, in the whole Christian church: And to the holy father Urban VIII. of that name, by the mercy of God, pope, and our Lord, and to his successor in the government of the church, we do promise, offer, and swear true obedience, and subject, with humility at his feet, our person and empire. So help us God, and these holy Gospels before us."—After this, each man swore personal obedience, officers, priests, and monks, according to their several orders or conditions.

The prince-royal, Facilidas, purely and simply in the form prescribed, took this oath, without any addition or alteration. But Ras Sela Christos, heated with zeal, after repeating the formula, drawing his sword in violent passion, uttered these words, "What has passed, let it be past; but, from this day forward, he that falls from his duty, this shall be his judge *."

This hasty speech, not well understood, was thought by some to reflect on those he had discovered to be in the confederacy with the rebel Welled Gabriel. As the court was full of parties and discontent, every one applied the threat to himself, and all joined in a league to undo Sela Christos, who had so wantonly declared himself the leader and champion of persecution.

To this oath of obedience to the pope, he likewise added one to the king, and to the prince his successor, Facilidas, with a strange clause, or qualification, which

* It is apparently a speech in a passion; for Sela Christos was one of the most learned of the Abyssinians; yet the words themselves, if literally translated, are scarcely intelligible.

made what he said formerly still worse:—"I likewise swear to the prince, as heir of his father in this empire, as long as he shall hold favour, and defend the holy Catholic faith; and if he shall fail in this, I hereby swear to be his greatest enemy." This extravagant addition he insisted should be imposed upon all the officers of state, and of the army then at court; and therefore did most deservedly seal his own condemnation and punishment, which overtook him in the end, though it did not follow till long after.

To these violent proceedings were added others still more violent. A solemn excommunication was pronounced against all such as did not keep that oath; and a proclamation was forthwith made, "That all people, in the line of being ordained priests, should first embrace the Catholic religion upon pain of death; that all should observe the form of the church of Rome in the celebration of Easter and Lent, under the same penalty; and with that the ceremonies of the day ended.

> Tempus erit cum magno optaverit emptum,
> Intactum Pallanta.

It was a day ever to be marked with black, not only in the annals of Ethiopia, but in those of Rome.

Although the arrival of the patriarch at Bilur had been happily effected, both as to himself and those who attended him, it was not so with some of his brethren sent to assist him in that mission. Two Jesuits, Francisco Machado and Bernard Pereira, had received the king's letters in India for their safe conduct to Bilur, in Dancali. Whether by malice, or inadvertency, the king's secretary, instead of Bilular, had mentioned Zeyla in the letter.

Zeyla, an island belonging to the king of Adel, was, of all other places, that where the people were most

inveterate against the Catholic religion. No sooner did the Shekh know the quality and errand of these missionaries, than he confined them to close prison; where, after great suffering, they were both put to death; and, to aggravate this, a letter was written to Socinios, stigmatising him with the name of apostate from the religion of his forefathers, and applying to him many opprobrious names.

This letter, at another time, would not have failed to have been followed by the chastisement it deserved. But Adel, formerly a flourishing and commercial kingdom, was now fallen, and reduced to a multitude of banditti. Trade had left it. A garrison of nominal janizaries, since the reign of Sultan Selim, had kept the little island of Zeyla, for the pretended purpose of a customhouse; but, in fact, it was a post of robbers, who only maintained themselves there for the sake of plundering merchants who came by sea; while the Galla, pouring in numbers upon the prince from the continent, and the ancient kingdom of Adel, had left him nothing but Aussa the capital, a town situated upon a rock, on the banks of the river Hawash, Azab, and Raheeta, and a few other miserable villages upon the coast; and even part of these were daily falling into the hands of that enemy, destined very soon to overrun them all. This abject state to which they had been reduced, we may suppose, was the only reason that protected them from the vengeance of a high-spirited prince, such as Socinios certainly was.

This violent conduct of Socinios, in his abjuration, was followed by that of the patriarch Alphonso Mendes, perfectly in the same spirit. The clergy were reordained; their churches consecrated anew; grown men, as well as children, again baptised; the moveable feasts and festivals reduced to the forms and

times of the church of Rome; circumcision, polygamy, and divorce, were abrogated for ever; and the many questions that arose on these matters, and which were understood to belong to the civil judge, the patriarch called to his own tribunal exclusively,

All the tenets of the church of Alexandria, whether of faith or discipline, were rejected; and it was not known how far the patriarch intended to subject the civil jurisdiction of the judges to the ecclesiastical power. Two steps that he took, the one immediately after the other, seemed to give great reason of fear upon this head.

In order to understand the first of these cases, it will be necessary to know, that it is a fundamental constitution of the monarchy of Ethiopia, that all lands belong to the king; and that there is no such thing as church-lands in this country. Those that the king has given for the maintenance of churches, or monasteries, are resumed every day, at the instance, and for the convenience, of individuals, and new ones granted in their stead, sometimes of a greater value, sometimes of a less. Nor have the priests or monks any property in these lands. A lay-officer, appointed by the king, divides to each monk or priest his quota of the revenue, applying any overplus to other uses; which is, we may suppose, often putting it into his own pocket.

There was at court a nobleman of great distinction for his family and rank, for his age, and the merit of his service, who had occupied some of the lands belonging to a monk, who happened to be a Catholic. This man, had he been an Alexandrian, could have had no recourse to the Abuna his patriarch, and the cause must have been tried before the civil judge. But Mendes was of another opinion. He ordered the nobleman to make his defence before the ecclesiastical

tribunal; and, upon his refusing this, as a novelty to which he was not bound, he condemned him immediately to restore the lands to the monk. This, too, was refused on the part of the present possessor, who being one day attending the king at church, the patriarch, without preamble, pronounced against him a formal sentence of excommunication, by which he gave him over, soul and body, to the devil.

Such procedure was, till then, unknown in Abyssinia. The nobleman, though otherwise brave, was so much affected with the terms of his sentence, as to faint, imagining himself already in the clutches of Satan; and it was with difficulty he recovered, the king making intercession with the patriarch to take off this censure, or rather this curse.

Sudden as it was, however, in the infliction, and easy in the removal, it made very lasting and serious impressions on the minds of men of all ranks, greatly to the disadvantage of the patriarch, and the professors of his new religion; in the exercise of which, they did not discover that degree of charity, meekness, mercy, and long-suffering, that they had been taught were the very essentials of it.

The next instance was this: There had been an Ichegué, that is, a superior of the monks of Debra Libanos, an order instituted by Abba Tecla Haimanout, the last Abyssinian Abuna, not more celebrated in the church than the state, as being the restorer of the line of Solomon, for many years banished to Shoa; and this superior, besides the dignity of his office, was remarkable for an innocent, pious, and holy life. It happened, that a Catholic monk officiated in a church where this Itchegué had been buried under the altar; the patriarch declared the church defiled by the burial of that heretic and schismatic, and suspended the celebration of divine service, till the body was raised

and thrown out of the church, in a most indecent manner. Universal discontent seized the minds of all men; and, from that time, it seemed the friends of the old religion began again to recover strength, and the Catholics to be looked upon, if not with hatred, yet with terror; and every trifle now contributed towards the one or the other.

The Jesuits, following practices or customs of their own, had thought fit to exhibit a kind of religious plays or farces. The devil, in these pieces, is always the buffoon; he plays harlequin and slight-of-hand tricks, fires squibs, and gun-powder, very little consistent with the decency of the other persons who compose the drama. This continued to be practised in several Catholic countries in Europe, while that learned company existed *. It happened to be necessary to introduce figures of this kind blacked all over, and in masks, with cloven feet, &c. The first exhibition of these figures so surprised and terrified the Abyssinian audience, that they fled immediately upon their appearance, crying out, Alas! alas! these Franks have brought devils into our country with them!

This great extension of civil jurisdiction, and the large strides it took to annihilate the civil power; the encroachments it made upon the prerogative of the king, till now supreme in all causes, ecclesiastical and civil; the more than regal, the more, if possible, than papal pride of the patriarch, began to be felt universally; and it was seen to be intended to lessen every order of government, from the king to the lowest officer in the province, From this time, therefore, we may date the decline of the Catholic interest in Abyssinia. The first blow was given

* I have seen them often at Madrid.

it by the king himself, not with a view to destroy it, for he was a sincere Catholic upon principle, but to controul and keep it within some bounds, as he found there was no order could otherwise be maintained.

He desired the patriarch to permit the use of the antient liturgies of Ethiopia, altered by himself in every thing where they did not agree with that of the church of Rome. With this the patriarch was obliged to comply, because there was in it an appearance of reason that men should pray to God in a language that they understood, and which was their own, rather than a foreign tongue, of which they did not understand one word This was thought so obvious in Ethiopia as not to admit of any doubt. But the order and practice of the church of Rome was just the contrary; and this wound was a mortal one; for no sooner was the permission given to use their own liturgies, than all the Abyssinians embraced them to a man, and went on in their old prayers and services without any of the patriarch's alterations.

To these events, not important in themselves, but only from the effect they had upon the minds of men, succeeded tragedies of a more serious nature. I have already observed, in speaking of the Galla, that they were divided into three principal divisions; those on the east of Abyssinia were called Bertuma Galla, those on the south called Toluma, and those on the west Boren Galla; each of these were divided into seven, and these again subdivided into a number of tribes. Each of these seven nations choose a king once in seven years, called Lubo; and it is usually the first act of the new king's reign to over-run the neighbouring provinces of Abyssinia, laying every thing waste with fire and sword for this year, even if they had no provocation, but had been at peace for several years before.

The Abyssinians remained long in ignorance of this cause of these invasions, and, while that was the case, they could take no measures to be prepared against, and resist them. But after, when the customs of the Galla were better known, their periodical invasions were watched and provided against, so that, though they were still continued, they were generally repelled with the slaughter and defeat of the invaders.

It happened that the present year, 1627, was the season of electing the king, and of the invasion. Though the time of the expedition was known, no intelligence had been given of the manner in which it was to be executed. In past times, the nations, or tribes of Galla, assaulted each the opposite province in whose frontiers they were settled; but this year it was agreed among them to choose one province, Gojam, which, by uniting their whole force, they were to devote to destruction, or, if possible, keep possession of it.

Buco was governor of Gojam; the king had sent Sela Christos to his assistance, and was intending to follow with another army himself. In the mean time, the passes through which the Galla used to enter were all lined with men, and every preparation made to receive them.

These barbarians advanced to the Nile in multitudes never seen before; and, finding the province perfectly on its guard, they feigned a panic, or disagreement among themselves, retired in seeming confusion, and dispersed, some, it was said, to their own homes, and some to an expedition against Narea. This in reality had often happened; but now it was only a stratagem; for they all assembled in their own country Bizamo, of which the Abyssinians had no intelligence. Buco, thinking he was free of them for that year, disbanded his troops, or detached them to other ser-

vices; Sela Christos did the same; neither did Socinios advance with his army.

In that interval of weakness, news were sent to Buco that the Galla had passed the Nile. Upon which he advanced with 1000 foot and 200 horse, believing that it was some small part of that army which he thought had some time before been dispersed. After hearing mass with great devotion, and receiving the sacrament, in passing through a thick wood, he was assaulted by the Galla. Being a man brave in his own person, and exceedingly well trained to arms, he fought so successfully, and so encouraged his men by his example, that he cut that body of Galla entirely to pieces; and, as he thought the whole matter then at an end, he ordered his drums to beat, and his trumpets to sound, in token of victory.

The rest of the Galla, who were now dispersed through the province, but at no great distance, burning and destroying, as their custom is, and who left this body behind them, only to secure their retreat across the river, returned all to their colours, upon hearing the drums and trumpets of Kasmati Buco, whom they did not know to be so near; and, as soon as he came in sight, despising his small number, they surrounded them on every side. Buco immediately saw that he was a lost man; but, considering the multitude of the enemy, and the unprepared state of the province, he thought his own life and those of his followers could not be better employed than by obstinately fighting to disable the enemy, so as to put it out of their power to pursue the ruin of the country further; throwing himself furiously into the thickest of the Galla, he, at first onset, killed four of the most forward of their leaders, and made himself a lane through the troops opposing him; and he was now got without their circle, when some of his officers

seeing him, cried to him to make the best of his way, as affairs were desperate, and not to add, by his death, to the misfortunes of that day.

Upon this he paused, as recollecting himself for a moment; but, disdaining to survive the loss of his army, he threw himself again among the Galla, where his men were still fighting, carrying victory wherever he went. His horse was at last wounded, and, being otherwise young and untrained, became ungovernable. It was necessary to quit him, when, drawing his sword, and leaping upon the ground, he continued the fight with the same degree of courage, till the Galla, who did not dare to approach him near, killed him by a number of javelins thrown at a distance.

The news of the defeat and death of Buco reached Sela Christos, then in march to join him; nor did the misfortune that had already happened, nor the bad prospect of his own situation, alter his resolution of attacking the enemy: But he first wrote to the king his brother, telling him his situation, and the probable consequences of doing his duty as he had determined, laying all the blame upon the malice of his enemies, who, to gratify their own private malice, had left him without assistance, and occasioned misfortunes so detrimental to the commonweal.

Sela Christos passed this night upon a rising ground, and early in the morning descended into the plain, with a view of attacking the Galla, when, to his great surprise, that barbarous people, content with the slaughter of Kasmati Buco and his army, and not willing to risk a large quantity of plunder with which their whole army was loaded, had repassed the Nile, and returned home.

Tecla Georgis was son-in-law to Socinios, and then governor of Tigré, but at variance with his father-in-law, upon some quarrel with his wife. Determined

on this account to rebel, he associated with some noblemen of the first rank and power in Tigré, particularly Guebra Mariam and John Akayo, declaring to them, that he would no longer suffer the Roman religion, but defend the ancient church of Alexandria to the utmost of his power. And, to convince all the Abyssinians of his sincerity, he tore off the figures of crucifixes, and all church-ornaments and images of saints that were in relief, and burned them publicly, to make his reconciliation with the king impossible. He then called before him Abba Jacob, his Catholic chaplain, and, having stripped him of his pontificals, killed him with his own hand. There was no method he could devise of bringing his quarrel sooner to an issue, than this which he had adopted. But he did not seem to have taken equal pains to provide for his defence, as he had done to give provocation.

Socinios, upon the first intelligence of this murder and treason, ordered Keba Christos to march against him with the troops he had at hand. This general, equally a good soldier, subject, and Catholic, being convinced of the necessity of punishing speedily so monstrous a crime, passed by forced marches through Sire to Axum, thence to Fremona; and, having appointed Gaspar Paez to meet him there, he confessed himself, and received the sacrament from that Jesuit's hands. From Fremona he continued with the same speed, making three ordinary days marches in one, being desirous of preventing the possibility of Tecla Georgis's collecting troops, and taking refuge on a mountain called Masba, which he heard to be his design.

On the 12th of December, 1628, news were brought him of the situation of the enemy; upon which he ordered his baggage to be left behind, and every sol-

dier to carry two loaves and to march without resting till he came up with Tecla Georgis.

In the morning of the day following, two horsemen, on the scout before him, discovered five of the rebel soldiers upon the look-out likewise. These, upon seeing Keba Christos's horsemen, returned immediately to their master, and told him that they had seen armed men, and conceived them to be the soldiers of Keba Christos. To this intelligence Tecla Georgis answered, That Keba Christos was in the king's palace at Dancaz the 15th of November, and that it was impossible he then could be so near with an army, if he had even wings to fly; but that the men they had seen were probably reinforcements that he expected.

Keba Christos, on the contrary, hearing that the enemy was at hand, drew up his army in three divisions. The first consisted of his own household, the second of a body of horse of the king's household, called the Koccob Horse, or Star Cavalry, from a silver star which each of them wears on the front of his helmet; and the third, of the people of Tigré who had joined him. In this order he came in sight of his enemy, posted upon a small height, divided from him only by a narrow plain. Tecla Georgis, convinced now that it was Keba Christos, formed his army into divisions; the one composed of a body called Tcheraguas, the other of a body called Sultan ba Christos; with these was a large corps of Galla, which had lately joined them.

Keba Christos, now returning to his troops, briefly said, "My children, I will not waste my time nor yours in discourse, or in telling you what you are to do. You have all arms in your hands; you are good Christians; and I can positively assure you there is not before you one of your enemies, that is not also an enemy to Christ." Then, placing himself before

the Koccob horse, he pulled off his helmet, and gave it to his servant, saying, "By my naked face you shall know me to-day, that I am not going in the midst of you as a general or commander, but foot for foot along with you, like a common soldier."

Upon having uncovered his head, he was quickly known by Tecla Georgis, from whose troops a number of muskets was fired at him. But this had so little effect upon this gallant officer, that, changing his place, (which then was at the head of the second division) he placed himself still nearer the enemy, in the front of his own household troops, which were the first; and the Galla charging them in that instant, he slew their leader with his own hand. Upon the death of their commander, these barbarians immediately fled, as is their custom, while Keba Christos endeavoured to make his way where Tecla Georgis was employed keeping his troops from following so bad an example. But so soon as that rebel saw his enemy approach him, he and his whole army joined the Galla in their flight; though he narrowly escaped, by the swiftness of his horse, a light javelin, thrown by Keba Christos, which struck him behind, but so feebly, by reason of the distance, that it did not pierce his armour.

The king's troops pursued vigorously, and soon brought to their general the mule, the sword, and helmet of Tecla Georgis, with the heads of 300 slain in the battle, most of them Gallas, and with them 12 heads of the most turbulent rebellious monks of Tigré. With these they also brought Adera, sister to Tecla Georgis, wounded in the throat, who had instigated him very strongly to commit the violences against the professors of the Catholic religion. Tafa, too, his master of the household, was taken prisoner; and it being made known to Keba Christos that this man

had assisted at the murder of Abba Jacob, he ordered him directly to be put to death.

Tecla Georgis, aided by the strength of his horse, and knowledge of the country, escaped and concealed himself from his pursuers for four days; but, on the Saturday that followed the victory, he was found in a cavern with his great confidants, Woldo Mariam, and a schismatic monk, whose name was Sebo Amlac. Tecla Georgis was carried alive to Keba Christos, who sent him to the king, his two companions being slain as soon as found, and their heads accompanied their living master, which, on their arrival at Dancaz, the king ordered to be hung upon a tree.

Tecla Georgis being convicted of sacrilege as well as murder, having burnt the crucifixes and images of the saints, was condemned to be burnt alive, and a lime-kiln was immediately prepared in which he was to suffer. Upon hearing this, he desired a Catholic confessor, as wishing to be reconciled to the church of Rome, and for this purpose he sent a request to the patriarch, who was at three leagues distance, and who dispatched Antonio Fernandes with full powers to absolve him from all manner of sins, and at the same time gave him orders to intercede strongly with the king to pardon the criminal. Tecla Georgis confessed publicly at the door of the church, and abjured the errors of the church of Alexandria.

After this, the father Fernandes applied to the king, pleading strongly for his pardon. To which the king answered, "Many reasons there are why I should desire to pardon Tecla Georgis. To say no more, he has been married to two of my daughters, and has by them two sons, both good soldiers and horsemen, who actually ride before me, and accompany me in battle. I have therefore pardoned him all the affronts and injuries he has done to me. But

were I to take upon myself to pardon the affronts and insults he has offered the Divine Majesty, I should turn the punishment of his sins upon myself, my family, and kingdom; and, therefore, I refuse your petition, and order you to return forthwith to Gorgora."

After the departure of the father, in consideration that Tecla Georgis had again embraced the Catholic religion, the king altered his sentence of being burnt, into that of being hanged privately in the house where he was then in prison; and, for that purpose, the executioner had brought with him the cord with which Tecla had ordered the feet of Abba Jacob to be tied. No sooner did he perceive that there were no hopes of pardon, by their beginning to tie his hands, than he again, with a loud voice, renounced his confession, declaring that he died an Alexandrian, and that there was but one nature in Christ. The executioner endeavoured to stop his further blasphemies, by drawing him up on the beam in the room; but he resisted so strongly, that there was time to inform Socinios of his abjuration: upon which the king ordered that he should be hanged publicly upon a pine-tree; and he was accordingly taken down half strangled, from the beam in the house, and hung upon the tree before the palace.

Adera, his sister, was next examined; and it being clearly proved that she had been a very active agent in the murder of Abba Jacob, she likewise was condemned to be hanged upon the same tree with her brother, fifteen days afterwards.

All that interval, the queen and ladies at court employed their utmost interest with the king to pardon Adera, for they looked upon it as a disgraceful thing, both to their sex and quality, that a woman of her family should be thus publicly executed. All the ladies

of the court having joined, therefore, in a public petition to the king while on his throne, he is said to have answered them by the following short parable:—

"There was once an old woman, who, being told of the death of an infant, said, with great indifference, Children are but tender; it is no wonder that they die, for any thing will kill a child. Being told of a youth dying, she observed, Young people are forward and rash; they are always in the way of some disaster; no wonder they die; it is impossible it should be otherwise. But being told an old woman was dead, she began to tear her hair, and lament, crying, Now the world is at an end if old women begin to die, fearing that her turn might be the next. In this manner, all of you have seen Tecla Georgis die, and also several of his companions, and you have not said a word. But now it is come to the hanging of one woman, you are all alarmed, and the world is at an end! Do not then deceive yourselves; but be assured that the same cord, which tied the feet of Abba Jacob, still remains sufficient to hang that sow Adera, and all those that shall be so wicked as to behave like her, to the disgrace of your sex, and their own rank and quality."

The effects of these ostentatious acts of reformation soon produced consequences which troubled their joy. The Agows of Lasta, called Tcheratz Agow, who live at the head of the Tacazze, rebelled. The country they occupy is not extensive, but exceedingly populous, and was supposed at that time to be able to bring into the field above 50,000 fighting men, besides leaving behind a sufficient number to defend the passes and strong-holds of their country, which are by much the most difficult and inaccessible of any in Abyssinia. They are divided into five clans, Waag, Ţettera, Dehaanah, Gouliou, and Louta, each having

an independent chief. They are exceedingly warlike; and though the country be so rude and rocky, they have a considerable number of good horses; and are in general reckoned among the bravest and most barbarous soldiers in Abyssinia. Their province abounds with all sorts of provisions, and they rarely can be forced to pay any thing to government in the name of tax, or tribute.

Tecla Georgis was now dead, but the cause of the rebellion still subsisted. While governor of Begemder, he had connived at many abuses of his officers who occupied the posts nearest to Lasta. These being young men, from wantonness only, without provocation, had made many different inroads, driving away cattle, and committing many other excesses. The Agows carried their complaints to the governor, who, far from hearing or redressing their wrongs, justified the conduct of his officers, by making inroads himself immediately after; but coming to an action in person with that people, he was shamefully beat, and a great part of his army left dead upon the field.

This misfortune very much affected Socinios. Nor did the Agows themselves doubt, but that a speedy chastisment was to follow this victory over Tecla Georgis.

There was a youth descended of the royal family, who, to preserve the freedom of his person, lived among the Galla, in expectation of better times. His name was Melca Christos*. To him the Agows applied, that, with this prince of the house of Solomon at their head, they might wipe off the odium of being reputed rebels, and appear as fighting under a lawful sovereign for reformation of abuses. The renunciation of the Alexandrian faith, forcibly obtruded upon

* In the MS. always called Balgue, the peasant.—E.

them by Socinios, served as cause of complaint. The Roman Catholic writers in the history of this mission, say this was but a pretext, in which I conceive they are right. I have lived among the Agows of Lasta, and in intimacy with many of them, who are not, to this day, so anxious about Christianity as to ascend one of their hills for the difference between that and Paganism; and I am satisfied, for these 300 years last past, there has been scarcely a common layman in Lasta that has known the distinction between the Alexandrian and the Roman church.

In the beginning of February 1629, the king marched from Dancaz towards Gojam, where he collected an army of 30,000 men, which, with the baggage, servants, and attendants, at that time very great and numerous, amounted to above 80,000 men.

Socinios detached a number of small parties to enter Lasta at different places. On the other hand, Melca Christos assembled his troops on the most inaccessible rocks; whence, when he spied occasion, he came suddenly down and surprised the enemy below. Among all the rude, high, and tremendous mountains of which this country consists, there is one especially, called by the name of Lasta. It is in the territory of Waag, strongly surrounded with inaccessible precipices, having a large plain on the top, abounding with every thing necessary, and watered by a fine stream that never fails.

The manner in which the Agows remained secure in this strong post, was misconstrued into fear by the king's army, which, in two divisions, advanced to the attack of the mountain. That on the right had, with some difficulty, scrambled up without opposition; but, being now arrived to the steep part of the rock, such a number of large stones was rolled down upon them from above, that this division of the army was entire-

ly destroyed. The number of stones on the brink of the precipices was inexhaustible; and, once put in motion, pursued the scattered troops with unavoidable speed, even down to the plains below. Among the slain was Guebra Christos, the king's son-in-law, dashed to pieces by the fragment of a rock. The left division was upon the point of suffering the same misfortune, had not Keba Christos come to their relief and draw them off, just before the enemy had begun to discharge this irresistible artillery against them.

The king, thus shamefully beaten, retired to Dancaz, leaving the entrances from Lasta strongly defended, lest these mountaineers should, by way of retaliation, fall upon the province of Begemder. But the late ill-fortune had dispirited the troops, and caused an indifference about duty, a want of obedience, and a relaxation in discipline in the whole army. Each of the detachments, therefore, one after the other, left their post from different excuses, and returned home. The bad consequences of this was now experienced. The Agows entered Begemder, spreading desolation everywhere. Melca Christos, no longer skulking among the rocks of Lasta, planted his standard upon the plain, within five days march of the capital where the king was residing.

The jealousies, that had arisen between Socinios and his brother-in-law Sela Christos, had been so much aggravated since the oath administered by the patriarch, that the king had again deprived him of Gojam, suffering him to live in obscurity in Damot, and among the Agows, occupied, as the Jesuits say, in the conversion of that Pagan people, by destroying their idols, which they represent to be a species of cane or bamboo*, and in forbidding the ceremonies of adora-

* Called by the Agows, Krihaha.

tion and devotion, which at stated times they paid to the river.

No remedy could be proposed, but the presence of Sela Christos, who, upon the first warning, joined the king; and coming suddenly upon the army of Lasta, occupied in laying waste the low country of Begemder, gave them such an overthrow, that sufficiently compensated the first loss of the king, and forced them again to take refuge among their strong-holds in Lasta.

A misfortune of another kind followed this victory: Laeca Mariam, a near relation to the king, was appointed governor of Begemder; but no sooner did he see himself vested with that government, than he meditated shaking off his allegiance to Socinios.

The king, after his last battle with the Agows had named his son, Facilidas, commander in chief of his forces; and, to secure him a powerful and able assistant, he had first restored Sela Christos to his government of Gojam, then sent him with an army to join Facilidas, and command under him.

The success was answerable to the prudence of the measure: for, immediately upon their arrival, they obliged Laeca Mariam to seek for refuge in the mountains of Amhara; and, without giving him time to recollect himself there, forced their way to the mountain to which he had retired, and from which he and his followers had no way to escape, but by venturing down a steep precipice. In attempting this, Laeca Mariam fell, and was dashed to pieces, as were many of his followers: the rest were slain by the army that pursued them.

Facilidas, at this time, began to attract the eyes of the nation in general. Besides personal bravery, he had shewn great military talents in the former campaign of Lasta. Though young, he had capacity and

resolution equal to his father; but was less warm and more reserved in his temper and discourse. He was thought to be an enemy to the Catholic religion, because he did not promote it; and neither exceeded nor fell short of what his father commanded him. Yet he lived with the Jesuits on such an even footing, that they confess they did not know whether he was their friend or enemy. He kept one of their number, called Father Angelis, constantly in his household, where he was much favoured, and constantly in his presence. He was thought to be an enemy to Sela Christos, though he never had shewn it.

Facilidas received a flattering message from Urban VIII., but did not answer it; nor does it appear his father ever desired him. For, through the whole course of the life of Socinios, as his enemies are forced to confess, he paid to his father's will the most passive obedience in every thing. The tyranny, however of church-government began to appear unmasked; and it is probable that the king, though resolved to die a Roman Catholic from principles of conscience, was indifferent about forging for his son the chains he had himself worn with pain.

However this may be, the last step of placing Facilidas at the head of the army was construed as another stroke of humiliation to the Catholics; especially as it was followed with the removal of Keba Christos (the support of that religion) from court, where he had been appointed Billetana Gueta. It is true, he was removed by what, in other times, would have been called preferment; but things had now changed their qualities, and places were not estimated, as formerly, by the consequence they gave in the empire, but by the opportunities they afforded of constant access to the king, and occasion of joining in councils with him, and defeating those of their enemies.

Keba Christos being created governor of Tigré, was to enter Lasta from that quarter on the north-east. He is said to have received his appointment with a great degree of concern; and to have told his friends, that he foresaw he never was to return from that expedition, which he did not regret, because he was convinced, by living much longer, it would be made his duty to assist at the fall of the Catholic religion.

After having performed his devotions at Fremona, this general advanced through Gouliou, a territory mostly inhabited by Galla, and destitute of any sort of provisions; after which he took possession of the mountains of Lasta, with a view to cover the march of the young prince Facilidas, whom he every day expected. But that prince not appearing in time, and provisions becoming scarce, no measure remained but making his retreat to Tigré; and, although he formed the best disposition for that purpose, the people of Lasta observing his intention in time, on his first movement attacked his rear-guard while he was descending the mountain, and put it to flight. Being thereby masters of the higher ground, they had the command of the cowardly soldiers below them, who could not insure their destruction more certainly than by the indecent manner in which they were flying.

Kebra Christos, deserted by all except a few servants, continued courageously fighting; and, although it was very possible for him to have escaped, he disdained to survive the loss of his army. Receiving at that time a wound from a javelin, which passed through his belly, and judging the stroke to be mortal, he gave up all further resistance, fell upon his knees to prayer, and was again wounded by a stone, which struck him to the ground. Two of the mountaineers immediately came up to him, one of whom did not know him, and

contented himself with stripping the body; but the other, remembering his face, cut his head off, and carried it to the rebel Melca Christos.

The misfortune was followed by another in Gojam, great to the nation in general, and greater still to the Catholic cause in particular. At the time that Sela Christos was in Begemder with prince Facilidas, the Galla from Bizamo, supposing the province of Damot without defence, passed the Nile, laying the whole province waste before them. Fecur Egzie, lieutenant-general under Sela Christos, although he had with him only a small number of troops, did not hesitate to march against those savages, to endeavour, if possible, to stop their ravages. The Galla, surprised at this, thought it was Sela Christos, and fled before him. He had now pursued them almost alone, and lighted in a low meadow to give grass to his horse, when he was surrounded and slain by a number of the enemy that lay hid among the bushes, and discovered how ill he was attended.

He was reputed a man of the best understanding, and the most liberal sentiments of any in Ethiopia; a great orator, excelling both in the gracefulness of manner, and copiousness and purity of his language. He was among the first that embraced the Catholic religion, even before the king or Sela Christos, and was the principal promoter of the translations of the Portuguese books into Ethiopic, assisted by the Jesuit Antonio de Angelis. We have seen, in the year 1613, the great efforts he made in the embassy to India by the coast of Melinda. He was an excellent horseman, but more violent and rash in battle than could have been expected from a man of such mild manners.

There happened at this time another novelty. The king brought the patriarch from Gorgora to Dancaz, this year, at Easter, to hear that feast celebrated, with

the Ethiopic service amended, of which we have already spoken abundantly. This countenance, so unnecessarily given to an innovation that produced every day such very bad effects to the Catholic interest, joined to many other circumstances, seemed clearly to indicate a change in that prince's mind.

The patriarch having made but a short stay at Dancaz, it was currently reported a disagreement had happened, and that the king had sent him prisoner to Gorgora; and this false report affected greatly the weight the Catholics were supposed before to have had at court. But the transaction that followed was of a nature to promise far more important consequences.

Socinios had a daughter, called Ozoro Wengelawit, which means the *evangelical*, a name she certainly deserved not from her manners. This lady was first married to Bela Christos, a man of rank at court, from whom she had been divorced. She was next married to another, and then (her two former husbands being still alive) to Tecla Georgis, who had before married her sister, another of the king's daughters. During this marriage she had openly lived in adultery with Za Christos, who had been married to her sister, a third daughter of the king. Za Christos had been happy enough in preserving this lady's esteem longer than any other of her husbands; and nothing would content her now but a marriage with her lover solemnly and publicly. For which purpose she applied to the patriarch to dispense with the affinity between her and Za Christos, arising from his having been married before to her sister.

It is not to be supposed that the patriarch would have resisted, if nothing had stood in the way except the affinity: but weighty impediments presented themselves besides; for either the first marriage was valid,

or it was not. If it was valid, then Wengelawit could not marry Za Christos or any one else, because her husband was alive; nor could she marry her second, nor Tecla Georgis, her third. If the first marriage was not valid, then the second was, which husband was still alive; and, in this case, a licence to marry was giving her liberty of having three husbands at one time. The patriarch, for these reasons, refused his authority to this manifold adultery and incest; nor could he, notwithstanding the intercession of the whole court, ever be brought to comply. His firmness (however commendable) greatly increased the hatred to his person, and aversion to the church of Rome.

One day when the king was sitting in his apartment, a monk entered the room, crying with a loud voice, "Hear the ambassador of God and of the Virgin Mary!" The king, at first sight of the man, expecting some improper liberty might be taken, ordered his attendants to turn him out at the door, and, being removed from his presence, to bring word what he had to say, which was to this effect: "It is three days since I rose from the dead. One day when I was standing in paradise, God called me, and sent me with this message to you:—O emperor, says God, it is now many years since I hoped you would amend of the great sin, the having forsaken the faith of your ancestors. All this time the Virgin Mary was kneeling before her blessed son, beseeching him to pardon you; and, in the end, it was agreed, that, unless you repent in a fortnight's time, you should be punished in such a manner, that you will not forget it presently."

Socinios desired them to ask the man, "How it was possible that, having so lately left the grave, his body should have so little of the emaciated appear-

ance of one long buried, and be now in such good case, fat and fair?" To this he answered, "That, in paradise, he thanked God, there was abundance of every thing; and people were very well used there, for he had lived upon good bread, and plenty of good wine, biscuits, and sweetmeats." To which Socinios answered, "Tell him, after the pains he has taken, it would be wrong in me to keep him long from so good a place as this paradise. Let him go and acquaint the person who sent him, I shall live and die in the Roman Catholic faith; and, in order that he may deliver the message quickly in the other world, hasten him instantly out of this, by hanging him upon the tree before the palace-gate."

The love of the wine, sweetmeats, and other celestial food, seemed to have forsaken the ambassador. Upon hearing this message he recanted, and was pardoned at the joint petition of those of the court that were present, who concurred with the monk in thinking, that the message of the emperor was an indecent one, and ought not to be delivered; that having been in paradise once, was as much as fell to the lot of any one man, and that he should therefore remain upon earth. The intended catastrophe, then, of this singular ambassador was remitted; but the truth of his mission was believed by the populace, and raised great scruples in every weak mind.

The many misfortunes, that had lately befallen the troops of the king, were accounted as so much increase of power to the rebel Melca Christos, who, encouraged by the correspondence he held with the chiefs of the Alexandrian religion, began now to take upon him the state and office of a king. His first measure was to send, as governor to the province of Tigré, a son of that rebel Za Selasse, whose complicated trea-

sons, we have already seen, occasioned the death of two kings, Za Denghel and Jacob.

Asca Georgis was then governor of Tigré for Socinios, a man of merit and valour, but poor; and, though related to the king himself, had very few soldiers to be depended on, excepting his own servants, and two bodies of troops, which the king had sent him to maintain his authority, and to keep the province in order.

The new governor, sent by the rebel Melca Christos, had with him a considerable army; and, knowing the weakness of Asca Georgis, he paraded through Tigré in the utmost security.

One Saturday which, in defiance of the king's edict, he had determined to solemnize as a festival equal to Sunday, he had resolved on a party of pleasure in a valley, where, much at his ease, he was preparing an entertainment for his friends, and such of the province as came to offer their obedience. Intelligence of this party came to three Shums, commanders of small districts, two of them sons-in-law of the king, the third a very loyal subject. These three sent to Asca Georgis, to propose that, at a stated time, they should, each with his own men, fall separately upon the son of Za Selasse, and interrupt his entertainment.

This was executed with great order and punctuality. In the height of the festival, the rebels were surrounded by an unexpected enemy. To think of fighting was too late, nor was there time for flight. The greatest part of the army was cut to pieces with little resistance. The new governor saved himself, among the rest, by the goodness of his horse, leaving the Billetana Gueta, or chief master of the household of the rebel Melca Christos, dead upon the spot, with about 4000 of his men. Among the plunder were taken

32 kettle-drums, which alone were evidence sufficient of the greatness of the slaughter.

Although the happy turn Socinios's affairs had taken had given him leisure to pass this winter at home, and in greater quiet than he had done in former ones, yet the calm which it produced was of very short duration. The people of Lasta, perceiving some of the prince's army busy in destroying their harvest when almost ripe, came down suddenly upon them from the mountain, and put them to flight with very great slaughter. The blame of this was laid upon Sela Christos, who might have prevented the calamity; and this accusation, with many others, were brought against him to the king, by Lesana Christos.

This man had been condemned to die for an offence, some time before, by Ras Sela Christos; but having fled to the king, who heard his cause, the sentence was reversed. Some time after this he fell into the hands of the Ras, who put him to death upon his former sentence, without regarding the late pardon of the king. The violent act became the foundation upon which his enemies built many accusations, mostly void of truth.

The king upon this took from him the government of Gojam, and gave it to a young nobleman, whose name was Serca Christos, supposed to be a friend and dependent upon the prince Facilidas. Serca Christos was no sooner arrived in his government, than he resolved to rebel, and privately solicited the young prince Facilidas to take up arms, and make a common cause against the king his father, in favour of the Alexandrian church. At the time that the young man departed to his government, Socinios had earnestly recommended to him, and he had most solemnly promised, to protect the Catholic religion in his province; and, seemingly for this purpose, he had

taken with him a Jesuit, named Francisco de Carvalho.

Another affair, which the king particularly charged him with, was the care of a caravan which once a-year came from Narea. This, besides many other valuable articles for the merchant, brought 1000 wakeas of gold, as tribute to the king, equal to about 10,000 dollars, or crowns of our money: its whole way was through barbarous and lawless nations of Galla, till they arrived at the Nile; then through the Gafats and Gongas, immediately after having passed it.

Serca Christos, in his march, was come to a settlement of those last-mentioned savages, where the Gafats, Agows, and Damots, all in peace, pastured immense flocks of cattle together. There are no where, I believe, in the world, cattle so beautiful as those of the Gafats, nor in such numbers. Large plains, for many days journey, are filled so full of these, that they appear as one market.

Serca Christos, halted here to give grass to his horses; and while this was doing, it entered into his young head, that making prize of the cattle was of much greater consequence than protecting the caravan of Narea. Assembling then his cavalry, he fell upon the poor Gafats and Damots, who feared no harm; and, having soon put them all to flight, he drove off their cattle in such numbers, that, at Dancaz, it was said, above 100,000 had reached that market.

The king, much shocked at this violent robbery, ordered Serca Christos to give up the cattle, and surrender himself as prisoner. This message of the king he answered in terms of duty and obedience; but, in the mean time, went to the prince, and proposed to him to declare himself king and champion of the

church of Alexandria. Facilidas received him with sharp reproofs, and he returned home much discontented. However, as he had now declared himself, he resolved to put the best face upon the matter; and, in order to make it generally believed that the prince and he understood each other, he sent him publicly word, "I have done what your highness ordered me; come and take possession of your kingdom." Upon which the prince ordered his messenger to be put in irons, and sent to Dancaz to the king his father.

After this, Serca Christos ordered proclamation to be made that prince Facilidas was king, at the palace of the governor of Gojam, which Sela Christos had built near the convent of Collela. As one article of it was the abolishing of the Roman faith, the fathers ran precipitately into the convent, and shut the doors upon themselves, fearing they should be insulted by the army of schismatics: but a number of the Portuguese, who lived in the neighbourhood, being brought into the church with them, and there having been loop-holes made in the walls, and abundance of fire-arms left there in deposit by Sela Christos, the rebel governor did not choose to attempt any thing against them at that time. On the contrary, he sent them word that he was in his heart a Roman Catholic, and only, for the present, obliged to dissemble; but he would protect them to the utmost, desiring them to send him the fire-arms left there by Sela Christos, which they absolutely refused to do.

Serca Christos, apprehending that his army (if not acting under some chief of the royal family) would forsake him on the first appearance of the prince, had recourse to a child of the blood-royal, then living in obscurity among his female relations; and this infant he made king, in hopes, if he succeeded, to govern during his minority. There were many who expect-

ed the prince would reconcile him to the king, especially as he had yet preserved a respect for the Jesuits, and this he imagined was one cause why the schismatics had not joined him in the numbers necessary. In order to shew that he designed no reconciliation with the king, and to make such agreement impossible, he adopted the same sacrilegious example that had so ill succeeded with Tecla Georgis.

Za Selasse, a priest of Selalo, had been heard to say, when Serca Christos was appointed to the government of Gojam, "There is an end of the Catholic faith in this province." Being now called before the governor, he was forbid to say mass according to the forms of the church of Rome. This the priest submitted to; but, being ordered to deny the two natures in Christ, he declared this was a point of faith which he would never give up, but always confess Christ was perfect God and perfect man. Upon this Serca Christos ordered him to be slain; and he was accordingly thrust through with many lances, repeating these words, God and man! God and man! till his last breath.

Serca Christos had now drawn the sword, and thrown away the scabbard. Upon receiving the news, the king ordered the prince, who waited but his command, to march against him. The murder of Za Selasse had procurred an accession of fanatics and monks, but very few soldiers; so that as soon as he heard with what diligence the prince was advancing, he left his whole baggage, and fled into those high and craggy mountains, that form the banks of the Nile in Damot.

The prince pressed closely upon him, notwithstanding the difficulty of the ground; so that no safety remained for him but to pass the Nile into the country of the Galla, where he thought himself in safety. In

this, however, he was mistaken. He had to do with a general of the most active kind, in the person of Facilidas, who crossed the Nile after him; and, the third day, forced him to a battle on such ground as the prince had chosen, who was likewise much his superior in number of troops. But there was no longer any remedy; Serca Christos made the best that he could of this necessity, and fought with great obstinacy, till, his men being for the most part slain, he was forced, with the few that remained, to take refuge on a high hill, whence the prince obliged him to deliver himself up to his mercy without condition.

Facilidas immediately dispatched news of his victory to court; and fifteen days after, he followed himself, bringing Serca Christos, with six of his principal officers and counsellors, loaded with heavy chains. Being interrogated by the judges, What he had to answer for his treasons? the prisoner denied that he had any occasion to answer, because he had already received pardon from the prince. This excuse was not admitted, the prince having disowned it absolutely. Upon which he was sentenced to death; and, though he appealed to the king, his sentence was confirmed.

It was too late to execute the sentence that night; but next morning the seven prisoners were put to death. One of the principal servants of Serca Christos being asked to confess and turn Catholic, abandoned himself to great rage, utering many curses and blasphemies against the king; who, therefore, ordered him to be fastened upon a hook of iron, where he continued his curses, till at last he was slain by lances.

Serca Christos, cousin to Socinios, was treated with more respect. He, with seeming candour, declared, that he would die a Catholic; and the king, very desirous of this, gave orders to Diego de Mattos, a priest,

to attend him constantly in prison. After which, one night, he sent five of his confidential servants, who killed him privately, to prevent his recantation.

Socinios had again taken Gojam from Sela Christos; which last disgrace so affected him, that he desired to retire and live as a private man in that province.

The king, having now no other enemy, all his attention was employed in preparing for a campaign against Melca Christos of Lasta. But, as he found his army full of disaffection, it was proposed to him, before he took the field, to content them so far as to indulge the Alexandrians in some rites of the old church; and a proclamation was accordingly made by the king, "That those who chose to observe the Wednesday as a fast, instead of Saturday, might do it;" and some other such indulgences as these were granted, which were understood to affect the faith.

As soon as this came to the ears of the patriarch, he wrote a very sharp letter to the king, reproving him for the proclamation that he had made; adding, that it was an encroachment upon the office of the priesthood, that he, a layman, should take upon him to direct in matters merely ecclesiastical. He warned the king, moreover, that God would call him to the very strictest account for this presumption; and reminded him of the words of Azarias, the chief priest, to king Uzziah, and of the punishment of leprosy that followed the king's encroachment on the ecclesiastical function; and insisted upon Socinios contradicting his proclamation by another.

Socinios so far complied, that the alteration made by the last proclamation was confined to three articles. First, that no liturgy, unless amended by the patriarch, was to be used in divine service. Secondly, that all feasts, excepting Easter and those that de-

pended upon it, should be kept according to the ancient computation of time. And, thirdly, that whoever chose, might fast on Wednesday, rather than on the Saturday.

At the same time, the king expressed himself as greatly offended at the freedom of the application of the story of Azarias and Uzziah to him. He told the patriarch plainly, that it was not by his sermons, nor those of the fathers, nor by the miracles they wrought, nor by the desire of the people, but by his edicts alone, that the Roman religion was introduced into Ethiopia; and, therefore, that the patriarch had not the least reason to complain of any thing being altered by the authority that first established it. But, from this time, it plainly appears, that Socinios began to entertain ideas, at least, of the church discipline and government, very opposite to those he had when he first embraced the Romish religion.

The king now set out in his campaign for Lasta with a large army, which he commanded himself, and under him his son, the prince Facilidas. Upon entering the mountain, he divided his army into three divisions. The first commanded by the prince, and under him Za Mariam Adebo, his master of the household, was ordered to attack, scale, and lodge themselves on the highest part of the mountain. The second he gave to Guebro Christos, governor of Begemder; and in this he placed the regiment, or body of troops, called Inaches, veteran soldiers of Sela Christos, and a small, but brave body of troops, containing the sons of Portuguese: These he directed to occupy the vallies and low ground. In the centre the king commanded in person.

The rebel chief and his mountaineers remained in a state of security; for they neither thought to be so speedily attacked, nor that Socinios could have raised

so large an army. They abandoned, therefore, the lower ground, and all took posts upon the heights. The prince advanced to the first entrance, and ordered Damo, his Billetana Gueta, to force it, with four companies of good soldiers, who ascended the mountain with great perseverance; and, notwithstanding the obstinate defence of the rebels, made themselves master of that post; having killed two of the bravest officers Melca Christos had, the one named Billene, the other Tecla Mariam, sirnamed *defender of the faith*, because he was the first that brought Galla to the assistance of Melca Christos.

There were likewise slain, at the same time, four priests and five monks, after a desperate resistance; one of whom, calling the king's troops Moors, forbade them to approach for fear of defiling him; and then, with a book in his hand, threw himself over the rock, and was dashed to pieces in the plain below. Here the prince met with an enemy he did not expect: The cold was so excessive, that above fifty persons were frozen to death.

The top of the mountain, which was the second entry into Lasta, was occupied by a still larger body of rebels; and therefore, necessary to be immediately stormed, else those below were in imminent danger of being dashed to pieces by the large stones rolled down upon them. The prince divided his army into two parties, exhorting them, without loss of time, to attack that post; but the rebels, seeing the good countenance with which they ascended, forsook their station and fled; so that this second mountain was gained with much less loss and difficulty than the first.

Behind this, and higher than all the rest, appeared the third, which struck the assailants at first with terror and despair. This was carried with still less loss on the part of the prince, because he was assisted by

the Inaches and Portuguese, who cut off the communication below, and hindered one mountain from succouring the other. Here they found great store of arms, offensive and defensive; coats of mail, mules, and kettle-drums; and they penetrated to the head-quarters of Melca Christos, which was a small mountain, but very strong in situation, where a Portuguese captain seized the seat which served as a throne to the rebel; and had they not lost time, by falling to plunder, they would have taken Melca Christos himself, who with difficulty escaped, accompanied by ten horse.

To this last mountain Socinios repaired with the prince, and they were joined by the governors of Amhara and Tigré, who had forced their way in from the opposite side.

Hitherto all had gone well with the king; but when he had detached Guebra Christos, governor of Begemder, with the Inaches and Portuguese, who were at some distance, to destroy the crop, the mountaineers, again assembled on a high hill above them, saw their opportunity, fell suddenly upon the spoilers, and cut all the soldiers of Begemder to pieces. A considerable part of the Inaches fell also; but the rest, joining themselves with the Portuguese in one body, made good their retreat to the head-quarters.

The destruction of the corn everywhere around them, and the impossibility of bringing provisions there, as they were situated in the midst of their enemies, obliged the king to think of returning before the rebels should collect themselves, and cut off his retreat. And it was with great difficulty, and still greater loss, he accomplished this, and retired to Dancaz, abandoning Lasta as soon as he had subdued it, but leaving Begemder almost a prey to the rebels whom he had conquered in Lasta.

Socinios being now determined upon another campaign against Lasta, and for the relief of Begemder, ordered his troops to hold themselves in readiness to march as soon as the weather should permit. But an universal discontent had seized the whole army. They saw no end to this war, nor any repose from its victories, obtained with great bloodshed, without spoil, riches, or reward; no territory acquired to the king, nor nation subdued; but the time, when they were not actually in the field, filled up with executions, and the constant effusions of civil blood, that seemed to be more horrid than war itself. They, therefore, positively refused to march against Lasta; and the prince was deputed by them to inform the king, that they did not say the Roman faith was a bad one, as they did not understand it, nor desire to be instructed; that this was an affair which entirely regarded themselves, and no one would pretend to say there was any merit in professing a religion they did not understand or believe; that they were ready, however, to march and lay down their lives for the king and common-weal, provided he restored them their ancient religion, without which they would have no concern in the quarrel, nor even wish to be conquerors. Whether the king was really in the secret or not, I shall not say; but it is expressly mentioned in the annals of his reign, that Socinios did promise, by his son, to the army, that he would restore the Alexandrian faith if he should return victorious over Lasta; and the sudden manner in which he executed this, must convince every other person that it was so.

The army now marched from Dancaz, upon intelligence arriving that the rebels had left their strongholds in Lasta, and in their way to the capital to give the king battle there. It was the 26th of July 1631 the king discovered, by his scouts, that the rebel Mel-

ca Christos was at hand, having with him an army of about 25,000 men. Upon this intelligence he ordered his troops to halt, and hear mass from Diego de Mattos; and, having chosen his ground, he halted again at mid-day, and confessed, according to the rite of the church of Rome, and then formed his troops in order of battle.

It was not long till the enemy came in sight, but without shewing that alacrity, and desire of engaging, they used to do when in their native mountains. The king, at the head of the cavalry, fell so suddenly and so violently upon them, that he broke through the van-guard, commanded by Melca Christos, and put them to flight before his foot could come up. The rest of the army followed the example of their leader; and the enemy were everywhere trodden down and destroyed by the victorious horse, till night put an end to the pursuit.

Melca Christos, in the beginning of the engagement, saved himself by the swiftness of his horse; but 8000 of the mountaineers were slain upon the spot, among whom was Bicane, one of his generals, an excellent officer, both for the council and the field, and several other considerable persons, as well inhabitants of Lasta as others, who had taken that side from dislike to the king and his measures.

Next morning the king went out, with his son, to see the field of battle; where the prince Facilidas is said to have spoken to this effect, in the name of the army: "These men, whom you see slaughtered on the ground, were neither Pagans nor Mahometans, at whose death we should rejoice—they were Christians, lately your subjects and your countrymen, some of them your relations. This is not victory, which is gained over ourselves. In killing these, you drive the sword into your own entrails. How many men have

you slaughtered? How many more have you to kill? We are become a proverb, even among the Pagans and Moors, for carrying on this war, and for apostatizing, as they say, from the faith of our ancestors."—The king heard this speech without reply, and returned manifestly disconsolate to Dancaz; where, often before, he had feasted and triumphed for the gaining of a lesser victory.

After his arrival at Dancaz, he had a conference with the patriarch Alphonso Mendes, who, in a long speech, upbraided him with having deserted the Catholic faith at the time when the victory, obtained by their prayers, gave him an opportunity of confirming it. The king answered, with seeming indifference, that he had done every thing for the Catholic faith in his power; that he had shed the blood of thousands, and as much more would be shed; and still he was uncertain if it would produce any effect; but that he should think of it, and send him his resolutions tomorrow.

The next day Socinios made a declaration, by Za-Mariam, to the patriarch, to this purport: "When we embraced the faith of Rome, we laboured for it with great diligence; but the people shewed no affection for it. Julius rebelled, out of hatred against Sela Christos, under pretence of being defender of the ancient faith, and was slain, together with many of his followers. Gabriel did the same. Tecla Georgis, likewise, made a league to die for the Alexandrian faith; which he did, and many people with him. The same did Serca Christos the preceding year; and those peasants of Lasta fight for the same cause at this day. The faith of Rome is not a bad one; but the men of this country do not understand it, Let those that love it remain in that faith, in the same way as the Portuguese did in the time of Atzenaf Segued.

Let them eat and drink together, and let them marry the daughters of Abyssinians. As for those that are not inclined to the Roman faith, let them follow their ancient one as received from the church of Alexandria."

Upon this declaration, delivered by Za-Mariam, the patriarch inquired if it came from the king. Being answered that it did; after a short pause, he returned this answer by Emanuel Almeyda; "That the patriarch understood that both religions should be permitted in the kingdom, and that the Alexandrians were to have every indulgence that could be wished by them, without violating the purity of the Catholic faith; that, therefore, he had no difficulty of allowing the people of Lasta to live in the faith of their ancestors without alteration, as they had never embraced any other; but as for those who had sworn to persist in the Catholic faith, and had received the communion in that church, it could by no means, without a grievous sin, be granted to them to renounce that faith, in which they had deliberately sworn to live and die."

The king, upon this answer, which he understood well, and expected, only replied, "What is to be done? I have no longer the power of government in my own kingdom!"—And immediately ordered a herald to make the following proclamation:

"Hear us! hear us! hear us! First of all we gave you the Roman Catholic faith, as thinking it a good one; but many people have died fighting against it, as Julius, Gabriel, Tecla Georgis, Serca Christos, and, lastly, these rude peasants of Lasta. Now, therefore, we restore to you the faith of your ancestors; let your own priests say their mass in their own churches; let the people have their own altars for the sacrament, and their own liturgy, and be happy. As for myself, I am now old, and worn out with war and

infirmities, and no longer capable of governing; I name my son Facilidas to reign in my place."

Thus, in one day, fell the whole fabric of the Roman Catholic faith, and hierarchy, in Abyssinia; first regularly established, as I must always think, by Peter Paez, in moderation, charity, perseverance, long-suffering, and peace; extended and maintained afterwards by blood and violence beyond what could be expected from heathens, and by an exertion of the civil power in its own defence, against the encroachments of priesthood and ecclesiastical tyranny; which plainly had no other view, than, by annihilating the constitution under its native prince, to reduce Abyssinia to a Portuguese government, as had already been done with so many independent states in India.

This proclamation was made on the 14th of June 1632. After it Socinios took no care of public affairs. He had been long afflicted with various complaints, especially since the last campaign in Lasta; and affairs were now managed by prince Facilidas in hi father's place, though he did not take upon him the title of king. Emana Christos, brother of Sela Christos, a steady Alexandrian, and Guebra Christos, were then made governors of Lasta and Begemder; but no steps were taken, in this interval, against the Jesuits.

On the 7th of September the king died, and was buried with great pomp, by his son, in the church of Ganeta Jesus, which he himself had built, professing himself a Roman Catholic to the last. The Portuguese historians deny both his resignation of the crown, and his perseverance in the Roman Catholic faith to his death; but this apparently for their own purposes.

He was a prince remarkable for strength of body; of great courage and elevation of mind; had early

learned the exercise of arms, patience, perseverance, and every military virtue that could be acquired; and had passed the first part of his life as a private person in the midst of hardships and dangers.

He is celebrated to this day in Abyssinia for a talent, which seems to be the gift of nature; that of choosing, upon the first view, the proper ground for a camp or battle, and of embracing, in his own mind, in a moment, all the advantages and disadvantages that could result from any particular part of it. This talent is particularly recorded in several short proverbs, or military adages; such as the following: "Blind him first, or you shall never beat him." This most material qualification seemed to have been in part transmitted to Ras Michael, the greatest Abyssinian general in my time, descended from Socinios by his mother; and, from this superiority alone over the other commanders opposed to him, he is said to have been victorious in forty three pitched battles.

Socinios embraced the Catholic religion from conviction, and studied it with great application, as far as his narrow means of instruction would allow; and there can be no doubt that, under the moderate conduct of Peter Paez, who converted him, he would have died a martyr for that religion. There seems as little reason to doubt, conscientious as he was, if he had been a young man, that he would have quitted it for the good of his country, and from his inability to suffer the tyranny of Alphonso Mendes, with his continual encroachment upon civil government. Being, in the last years of his life, left without one soldier to draw his sword for the Catholic cause, he kept his religion, and abandoned his crown; and having been, it should seem, for some time, convinced that the government of the church of Rome, in such hands as he left it, was incompatible with monarchy, he took

no pains to change the known sentiments of Facilidas, render him favourable to the Roman faith, or name another of his sons to succeed him, whom he found to be more so.

The Jesuits, considering only the catastrophe, and unmindful of the strenuous efforts made to establish their religion during his whole reign, have traduced his character as that of an apostate, for giving way to the universal demand of his people, to have their ancient form of worship restored, when his army had deserted him, and he himself was dying of old age. But every impartial man will admit, that the step he took, of abdicating his sovereignty over a people who had abjured the religion he had introduced among them, was, in his circumstances, just the reverse of apostacy, and the noblest action of his life.

His resignation of the crown, and tenacious persevering in the Catholic faith, together with the moderation of his son, the prince Facilidas, in appointing a regency to govern, rather than to mount the throne himself during his father's life, are three facts which we know to be true from the Abyssinian annals, and which the Jesuits have endeavoured to suppress, that they might the more easily asperse the character of the father and the son.

They have pretended that it was the queen, and other ladies at court, who, by their influence, seduced the king from the Catholic religion. But Socinios was then past seventy, the queen near sixty, and he had no other wives or mistresses. To judge, moreover, by his behaviour in the affair of Adera, sister to Tecla Georgis, the voice of the women at court seems to have had no extraordinary weight with him. In a word, he never varied in his religion after he embraced that of Rome, but stedfastly adhered to it, when the pride and bad conduct of the Jesuits had scarcely

eft another friend to it in the whole kingdom; and, therefore, the charge of apostacy is certainly an unmerited falsehood.

As it is plain the Portuguese, from the beginning, believed their religion could only be established by force, and were persuaded that violence was lawful, the blame of so much bloodshed for so many years, and the final miscarriage of the whole scheme, must fall on their sovereign, the king of Spain and Portugal; who, having succeeded to his wish in the conquest of India, appears to have wanted the anxiety the patriarch had for the conversion of Abyssinia, nor even to have thought further of sending a body of troops with his priests to the succour of Socinios, whom he left to the prayers of Urban VIII., the merit of Ignatius Loyola, and the labours of his furious and fanatic disciples.

APPENDIX

TO

BOOK III.

No. I.

Miscellaneous Notes and Remarks on the MS. Abyssinian History brought from Gondar by Mr Bruce.

1. The complete chronicle of a reign, written by the king's historiographer, contains all the remarkable transactions at court during every day in the month throughout the whole year. Each month begins a new paragraph; the name of it is generally written with red ink; a very favourite ornament of the scribes. The first Abyssinian month begins on the 29th August, old style; and the division of the year coincides exactly with that of the Egyptians. The names of the months are not derived from any known language. They are, 1. Mascaram; 2. Tekempt; 3. Hedar; 4. Tahsas; 5. Ter; 6. Yacatit; 7. Magabit; 8. Miyazia; 9. Genbot; 10. Sene; 11. Hamle; 12. Nahassé. A very useful calendar was composed by Ludolf, from a martyrology in his possession, in which he points out the most remarkable saints,

and festivals current in Ethiopia; but, after all this skilful attention, it is still far from being complete. Mr Bruce brought home a slip of parchment, containing the names of the saints commemorated in Habbesh during the first fifteen days of Mascaram. These are, at a medium, about six for each day, the principal of whom have their legends given into the Synaxar. It appears that most of the long fables, recorded in that book, are translations from the Greek or Coptic, the originals of which were composed in Egypt.

A week is called in Habbesh *subâe*, equal to the Latin septimana; a month, from its being lunar, *werh*; a day, *amira* or *elet*. The days of the week are named by their number; ehud, the first, or Sanbat, the Sabbath; sanui, the second, Monday; salus, Tuesday; rebua, Wednesday; hamus, Thursday; areb, Friday; sanbat kidimat, the old (or Jewish) Sabbath, Saturday.

The Abyssinian vulgar era is the âmta alem, or year of the creation; but the number of years from that event to the reign of Teclahaimanout, 1769, is variously reckoned. During the period in which the Jesuits flourished in Ethiopia, the European calculation was adopted; and the Latin names of the months, the year of Christ, and several other vestiges of the intercourse with the west, are found in the histories of David, Claudius, and Susneus.

The method in which Mr Bruce computed the reigns of the kings, was the ordinary one of subtracting from the year 1769 the reign of Joas as found in the Annals; then from the remainder that of Yasous; and so on, back to Amda Sion. The years mentioned by the Jesuits, from the time of the first Portuguese embassy till their expulsion, served to correct those in the MSS. The days of the week are literally translated from the Ethiopic; and those of the month are valued by the corresponding day in the Julian computation. The imperfection of these methods must be supplied or understood by the reader: it would require much time and labour to reconcile perfectly the European and Ethiopic dates, which in these volumes only approximate to the truth *.

* The Ayssinians, in general, reckon 5,500 years from the creation to the birth of our Saviour, though in this their writers are

Of the facts which are given in the end of Book II. and in the course of Book III., the chronicle of Axum furnishes a very small part. As its reputation in Abyssinia is immense, and no analysis of its contents has been laid before the public, the reader will find one subjoined in the note †.

The appendix to this book is the only portion of it which is purely historical. It begins with a description of the church of Axum, founded by Abreha and Atsbeha. Then

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not unanimous. The annalists take great pains to state the year of the world, the epact, golden number (matque), and the name of the evangelist for every year, at the beginning of its history. Every four years are marked with the names of the four evangelists, from a particular arrangement in the service of the church. Other eras are mentioned occasionally; as the Era of Mercy (amt maharat), which commenced at the coming of Abba Salama, a few years before the birth of Zera Jacob. The Appendix to the book of Axum gives the principal dates of Ethiopic history according to this era, but so inaccurately as to destroy all confidence in the account. The Ethiopic scribes are so careless in their computations, and the transcription of their numeral characters, that no dependence can be had on any statements which they give to their readers, unconnected with proofs. On this subject see the table in Vol. VII.

† The Kebir Zaneguste, or Glory of the Kings, is a treatise which professes to establish the Ethiopic monarchy on the basis of divine right. It was written "to shew forth the glory of Rome and Ethiopia," two nations which are said to divide between them the sovereignty of the world, in direct inheritance from Adam.

Of this treatise Mr Bruce brought two copies from Gondar, one written in an older hand, divided into chapters, containing an Appendix on Abyssinian history and customs; and another, beautifully, but more incorrectly, written, without sections, and probably a transcript made for him while residing in that city. The former of these consists of 106 leaves, of which 18 are on the affairs of Abyssinia, distinct from the principal work, and five on the history of David III. The latter is written in a larger character, and occupies 136 folia. The size of both is quarto, nearly square, on yellow Abyssinian parchment, the sheets of which, about a foot in length and breadth, are called by the natives Brané.

The oldest copy appears to have been a present to Mr Bruce from Ras Michael, the celebrated governor of Tigre. It is orna-

follows a long account of the coronation of the kings, as given by Mr Bruce in the life of Socinios, which is abridged by all the annalists who treat of these matters. After this come two lists of the officers whom Solomon sent, along with Menilec, to his maternal kingdom of Saba; both very confused. The fourth section contains a catalogue of the kings of Axum, from Arwe, who reigned 400 years, to Maqueda, queen of Azeb, who visited Solomon in the fourth

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mented at the beginning with a beautiful drawing of an eagle in flight, holding in his beak and talons a scroll, which seems to have been executed by Mr Bruce or his assistant.

The treatise begins with the usual doxology to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and a profession of faith in the Trinity, as defined by the 318 orthodox of the council of Nice. The writer then testifies his belief in the great and glorious *Ark of Sion* and of the Law, devised and made in the Council of Heaven, before all created things, angels or men. After the formation of this (Tabot Hege), or Ark of the Law, and the creation and fall of the angels, the Trinity is asserted to have formed man, as a punishment on Satan and his followers. The Father said to the Son and Holy Spirit, Let us make man in our own image. The Son said, I will clothe Adam with flesh. The Spirit said, I will dwell in the breast of the prophets and saints. These transactions are proved by a passage from David, "Remember thy dwelling place of old, created for a safety, by the law of thy kingdom, in Mount Sion." The object of this chapter is, to shew that God created the Ark of Sion before all things, with a view to deliver it to man as a pledge of the divine law, and the symbol of dominion over the whole earth.

The title of chapter 2d is, "On the great monarchy." Let us give an account of who is great and who is small (says the writer) amongst the kings of the earth. He then mentions how Gregorius Thaumaturgos (in Ethiop Gebare Menker) having been thrown into a dungeon for fifteen years by a Pagan king, began to ruminate on the idle pomp of the infidel, whose confidence was placed in armies, chariots, and cities, and to compare it with the true dominion which God had given to the first man, and through him to the holy patriarchs. Gregory, now introduced as a speaker (chap. 3.), relates, in a prolix, romancing way, the investiture of Adam in the empire of the earth by his Maker. He then proceeds to tell how Adam disinherited his first born son, because he was a

year of his reign. She reigned after that visit 23 years. Ebn Hakim, or Wareza, i. e. the youth or prince, governed Ethiopia after his mother's resignation, about half a century.

The list of kings who succeeded him is double, and very discordant with itself. The numbers of the dates are as erroneous as the names are fabulous. Abreha and Atsbeha are called Agoula Anbasa, children of the lion. And there is likewise a derangement of the usual order in one of the

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sour, ill-looking infant, and conferred his kingdom on Abel for contrary reasons, which occasioned envy between the brothers, and the death of one of them. Seth is appointed by Adam to the vacant inheritance; and much oratory is employed in describing (chap. 6.) the sin of Cain, and the impiety of his race. All the vices of warm climates are ascribed to these degenerate mortals, who abandoned prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings, for eating, drinking, dancing, and music of all kinds; with other excesses, in which they vied with the horse, the ass, and the mule. A list is given of the patriarchal kings, of the just line, from Seth to Noah, which introduces the flood, and the destruction of all flesh, excepting his family. In these accounts, which are sufficiently minute, the Scripture is the basis; but the narrative is of the rabbinical kind, in a pompous style, and always collecting a mist of fable on every particular, through which it appears distorted and ridiculous. A translation of the titles of the chapters, a little extended, is all that the performance merits after this introduction. They are as follows: Ch. 9. On the Covenant of Noe. 10. On Sion: here the story of the celestial ark is resumed. 11. On the meeting of the 318 Orthodox at Nice, and their Council, formed to promote the purity of the faith. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, Give a narrative of the wickedness of Canaan; the history of Abraham and his covenant; with the lives of Isaac, Jacob, and Robel, his incestuous son. The deeds of Canaan and Robel are recorded to account for their being deprived of a share in the divine sovereignty of their family. 17. God delivers the heavenly ark to Moses on the mount. 18. Relates the meeting of the 318 bishops (likan papasat), at which, (c. 19 and 20) Damatius, the Roman bishop, stood up, and said he had found a book on the division of the world in the church of Sophia. In this volume it was recorded, that the earth was divided between the king of Rome and the king of Ethiopia, because they were both descended from Shem,

catalogues, in which Asato, or Goudit, the wicked queen, who polluted and destroyed the churches for 40 years, is put before several princes of the family which she is reported to have deposed. The house of Zague was probably little related to this Ethiopian Athaliah: it was Christian, and some of its princes eminent for abilities and piety. Mr Bruce has followed the second list, which is that usually transcribed into chronicles.

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the lineal successor of Noah by his own nomination. From the book he proceeds to establish the claims of Ethiopia, observing, that Menilec, the eldest son of Solomon by Maqueda queen of Sheba, had founded that monarchy; and had been approved of God, so far as to get possession of the Ark of Sion, which was made in heaven, but was kept at his birth in the temple of Jerusalem. 21. Begins with an account of the beauty riches, and wisdom of the queen, and of her commerce with Asia and India. Tameran, her principal merchant (c. 22.), becomes acquainted with the king of Judah, then collecting gold for the Temple. This trader enters Judea (c. 23), and brings back such a flattering account of Solomon, as induces (c. 24) the queen to undertake a journey to see him. She arrives at Jerusalem (c. 25) and converses (c. 26) with the king, who solves and proposes some riddles for her instruction; namely, a few enigmatical stories, invented by the Jewish rabbins and Arabs. Ch. 28. She is astonished at his wisdom, and, in consequence of this admiration, she obtains more of his royal bounty than he had hitherto bestowed on any of his allies. Ch. 29. The 318 fathers continue the history, and proceed (c. 30) to relate, how the king sware to her to make her child, if he should have one, the heir of his kingdom. Ch. 31. The king gives her his ring, and dismisses her to her own country, where she bore Menilec, the prince of Israel and Ethiopia. Ch. 33, 34, 35, Menilec grew up, and, by means of Tameran, began a correspondence with his father, who invited him to Jerusalem, where he met and conversed with him. The king (cc. 38, 39, 40, 41) put the youth of his realm under the command of his son, made him be anointed by Zadoc the high priest, and crowned, by the name of David his grandfather. As the prince had shewn no inclination to rule over Judea, Solomon prepared to dismiss him to Saba, with the sons of the first families in Jerusalem as his retinue and household. He gave him (c. 41 and 42.) his blessing, the two tables of the law, and the choice of the Jewish youth,

After Icon Amlac, the order of kings, and the length of their reigns, are clearly determined. A list of these, from him to Tecla-haimanout, the reigning sovereign, is inserted by the scribe, who wrote either for Michael or Mr Bruce. The subject of Axum is resumed, and an account given of the latest coronations which have been performed there. In the 231st year of mercy (Luke's Gospel), Sertza Denghel renewed all the laws and institutions laid down by the ancient

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much against the will of their parents. A list of their names, given in the two copies, illustrates, more than any other particular, the carelessness of the Ethiopic scribes, the only men of learning in the country, and the gross ignorance of the clergy, who are not able to discern the absurdity of this story. Only a few of the names coincide exactly in the two copies, though they are all corrupted from one source. They are all taken, not from the Hebrew, as a book so ancient must have been, but from the Greek. For instance; Azarias, the son of Zadok, went as lik cohenat, or high-priest; Ermias, or Elias, son of Arami, or Arani, and grandson of Nathan the prophet, as lik diaconat, or chief of the deacons; and Somonias, son of Abita, or Abitalam, as lam miziker, register of the cattle. The rest, to the amount of twelve or thirteen in all, have a similar appearance.

Chapters 44 and 45 describe the lamentation of the Jewish nobility on parting with their children, and the good advice and blessings they bestowed on them. The young priest, Azarias, had, in the mean time, formed a design (c. 46) of taking along with him the celestial Ark of the Covenant. This he secretly communicated to a few of his friends, in particular to the chief of the deacons. Zadoc, the high-priest, being absent, his son (c. 47) offered up a sacrifice in the Temple for himself and the young king, and, having obtained from heaven approbation of his conduct, stole the palladium of the monarchy of Adam. The ark was committed to the priests in his train, and the whole company (c. 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53), having received the blessings of their parents, set out for Ethiopia, by the way of Egypt, in winged chariots, which the Lord enabled to perform a journey of thirteen days in one. The Ethiopians, (c. 54, 55) received their new king and the ark with inexpressible joy; but very different were the feelings of Zadoc, who, discovering that the glory was departed from the Temple (c. 56, 57), informed his master of the loss, in the utmost dismay and consternation. The king (c. 58, 59,

kings, his fathers, at the city of Axum, the throne of the kings of Sion. The celestial ark, the first of all created things, entrusted to the patriarchs and Moses, and stolen away from Jerusalem in the days of Solomon, was kept in the principal church of this city.

Axum was built by the Egyptian Greeks; but no such tradition exists in Abyssinia. The natives ascribe the origin of its ruined structures to Abreha and Atsbeha, whose abi-

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burst into a violent rage, and ordered a pursuit; but some Egyptians newly arrived at court, told him, that the Ethiopic court had been seen, in its passage through Egypt, shining like fire, and flying like the wind, so that all attempts to overtake it would be useless. The whole nation was instantly filled with the most bitter sorrow; the king and high priest rent their clothes. Zadoc, however, (c. 61, 62, 63), moved with the spirit of prophecy, broke out into strains of consolation, by informing them that it was the will of the Lord, who had determined to fix the primogeniture of the house of David on the throne of Ethiopia, and to honour that kingdom with the ark of his sovereignty, the testimony of the divine right of Adam. The Jewish nobles (c. 63) perceived the hand of the Lord, and acquiesced in the severe dispensation of Providence.

Chapters 64, 65, 66, record the subsequent degeneracy of Solomon, who had now entered into a close affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and allowed himself to be led astray by the daughter of that prince. Some time after, he repents of his crimes, and is cheered by a revelation of the coming of Christ. The chapters, from the 68th to the 83d, treat of our Saviour and the Virgin, the sins of Rehoboam, Mary the daughter of David, the king of Rome, a descendant from Seth, the kings of Madian, Babylon, Persia, Moab, the Allophylae, or Philistines, and the feats of Samson, whose son became king over the latter people. The pretensions of all these nations to a share in the patriarchal monarchy are examined in a fabulous, legendary manner. Chapter 84 takes up the history of Menilec, who enters Saba in triumph, and is received by Maqueda with exultation. The queen swears (c. 86, 87) to deliver up her kingdom to him, having been informed of his coronation at Jerusalem, and calling the elders of the realm, utters her intention. Azarias (c. 90) announces a long eulogium on the queen's conduct; the coronation of David is again performed, and the Mosaical law established in Ethiopia.

lities were aided by the Holy Spirit. As Axum was the first seat of Christianity in this country, its clergy became very rich, through the veneration paid them by its ignorant sovereigns. They still claim many lands around it, as belonging to the church, and exhibit, as rights of these possessions, the grants of ancient kings. These grants are forgeries; but as they run in the legal style of the realm, one or two of them may be mentioned. The form is taken from the verbal proclamation made in all transfers of landed property.

"By the Grace of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we El-abreha and Atsbeha, kings of Axum, grant as fiefs (golatana goult) to the chief priest (gabaza) of Axum, Hausta with its bounds, Hambera with its bounds, Forma with its bounds, Amba-hausta with its bounds, Tawdi, Tselalo, Afgume, Seglamen, Madagwed Akeit, not by the kal hatse (kings messenger, or prolocutor), nor by the meconen, or auphari, (the governor of the province, and the collector of the revenue), but of ourselves we grant and appoint, we,

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Ch. 93. Resumes the corruption of the Romish kingdom, hinted at in former sections, and the religious and civil prosperity of Ethiopia, which now became the terror of its enemies in every direction. An Ethiopic campaign (c. 94) is related, and the glory of the king of Ethiopia, as direct heir of line to Shem, triumphantly celebrated. From ch. 96 to 117, the topics are rather miscellaneous—A prophecy respecting Christ—On the numbering of the Israelites—On the rod of Aaron—The fallen angels—The omnipresence and pre-existence of God—The three arks—The horns of the altar—The faith of Abraham. From c. 106 to 112, entirely a prophecy of the different events in the life of our Saviour. Ch. 113 discusses the favourite topic of the winged chariots of Ethiopia, and some other sources of the national glory. The work concludes with observations on the kings of Romia and Ethiopia, between whom the world is divided in this manner: "All the globe, north of Jerusalem, belongs to the former, and south of it to the latter."

Such is the outline of the Kebir Neguste, the glory of the Kings, usually called the Book, or Chronicle of Axum. It pretends to be a translation of a treatise found in the church of St Sophia by Damatius, bishop of Romia (perhaps Constantinople, and read at the council of Nice!

who found and build up, that it may be a mediation (merah) to us in the kingdom of heaven, and that the fruit of our body may be blessed, which shall sit on the throne of David. And if any one break or disannul this, let him be accursed by the mouth of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

A second clause grants more territories, and adds the anathema of a curse by the mouth of Petros and Paulos.

Similar grants follow, made by king Anbasa Wudem, Seif Araad, Zera Jacob, and others. One by a lady, probably a queen, runs thus: "I Welleta Mariam grant Phekulit, with its bounds, for the commemoration (taskar) of our Lady Mary (the Virgin) and myself, that this may be to me a mediation in the kingdom of heaven." In one instance, Zera Jacob prohibits any person from bringing lions, horses, mules, or cattle of any kind, into the domains of the priest of Axum. "Not by the kal-hatze, or by the meconen," says the king, "but by the voice of my mouth. Whoever breaks or disannuls this, let him be cursed like Arius the infidel, and Simon the sorcerer of Samaria. Amen."

After these, and other grants, follows a confused account of the churches, fountains, and obelisks, found in Axum. The different parts of the palace are mentioned; and several wonderful appearances, which were produced by miracles wrought on the spot. Axum, according to the legend, has been thrice founded: first by Ethiopius, the son of Cush, whose tomb was shewn there till very lately; next by Maqueda, queen of Saba or Azeb, who left her son in possession of it; and lastly, by Abreha and Atsbeha, in a miraculous and astonishing manner. Before their reign, most part of the ground, occupied by the present city, was covered by a lake. The princes ascended a hill called Debra Mekiada, and prayed to God that he would point out a place where they might raise a dwelling to his name. Our Lord descended, took dust, and sprinkled it where the church now stands. The ground became dry, where he was seen in the form of a fiery pillar, and the print of his feet (literally shoes) is still seen on an adjoining rock.

The next miracle was a convocation, summoned by the Virgin Mary at Mai-kirah, near this city, with a view to establish the Christian faith. Jared was a celebrated Ethiopic bishop in the days of Constantine, or Gebra Maskal, about the year 535. In order to settle some important points in the

faith, the Virgin transported Hieriacus from Bahnesa in Egypt, and Lebahawi from Syria, on rainbows, to converse with Jared. They conferred three days and three nights, after which they retired to their countries in peace.

The Appendix concludes with a table of the most remarkable events in the Ethiopic history, arranged according to the era of mercy. A miserable catalogue of the Roman emperors, extracted from the dreams of some ignorant monk, shews that the names and empire of the Cæsars are totally unknown in Abyssinia. A list of the Alexandrian patriarchs, down from St Mark to the Turkish conquest of Egypt, and a table of the caliphs from Mahomet to the fore-mentioned event, conclude the compilation.

I have entered into a detail of this collection, rather to shew the absolute penury of the Abyssinian history in early times, than on account of any value which the book possesses. A great deal more might have been expected from the clergy, who have possessed the art of writing since the days of their apostle Frumentius. The Kebir Neguste is an absurd performance, worthy to be read only by those holy men, who have allowed all their real ancient history to perish.

Mr Bruce arranged the several MSS. of the modern history of Abyssinia, which he had procured at Gondar, into five volumes, the first of which is the newest copy of the Book of Axum. The second volume is by far more authentic. It is written in a very neat but small hand, on thin parchment, and appears to be about an hundred years old. It contains 93 leaves, of which eleven are on the Adeline war of Amda Sion, seven on the history of Zera Jacob, eight on that of Bæda Mariam, interspersed with some chapters relating to his father: The kings Iscande and Naod are included in these last. After them five very obscure leaves are occupied by an account of the household of the ancient kings. As the Amharic, or court language, is but imperfectly known in Europe, many parts of this narrative are as mysterious as the history of a fete at St James's would be to an Ethiopian little acquainted with English. The first section of it contains the daily bill of fare for the palace, by no means a perspicuous one; but it is easy to discover in it beef, mutton, mustard, bread, and hydromel of various kinds, fowls under the name of dorho, zugara or guinea-hens, bo-

chur or antelopes, &c. &c. with a variety of sauces, not omitting pepper, and other ingredients of a less attractive kind. The portion of all the great divisions is defined; such as the Gera rak maseri, arbaa-bet, baal-diho, aisnaf, baal-washa, nesserkano, baaltit or woman-house, the pages, and servants of the various bets or companies. The order of encampment, the dresses of the priests who have access to the king, and the ceremonies and regulations observed when he goes to church, follow. Next comes a minute description of the numerous apartments of the royal treasury for money, cloths, arms, and ornaments of state. The gates of the camp are pointed out, and the guards belonging to each; with a description of the Bekel bet, or large establishment, formed in Shoa by Amda Sion for the breeding of mules, that animal being a favourite with the sovereigns and ladies of Abyssinia. The list closes with an enumeration of the officers who came from Jerusalem with Ebn Hakim, and of the cities or districts of Habbesh, in the time of Amda Sion. Three leaves more are employed on a rude kind of unintelligible poem on the cities and sovereigns of Ethiopia, and in describing the appanage of the Ozoros of Ambageshen, between the time of Zera Jacob and David III.

The melancholy reign of David, or Libna Denghel, a roll of continual misfortune, occupies only two leaves. There are three copies of it in Mr Bruce's MSS.: this, which is the oldest; another in the Chronicle of Axum; and a third in the Small Chronicle, mentioned, No. v. Vol. II. p. 407 They are evidently transcripts: the account is not older than the time of Susneus.

Before entering fully on the history of Claudius, a short narrative is given of his reign till the death of Mahomet Gragne. The valour and heresy of the Franks (Franje) from Portugal, with the fall of their captain (Gebtan) Donkestob, so the scribes call Don Christovam de Gama, are equally remembered. Gragne is said to have fallen by a shot from a servant of the king; by which they obscurely mean Peter Leon.

The MS. now assumes a systematical form, and consists of nine kefel, or divisions. The first, in twelve leaves, gives a full account of Claudius, in 95 short maaref, or chapters. This part was finished on Wednesday, 4th Megabit, A. D.

1500; 1240 of the Martyrs; 956 of the Hegira, according to the Ethiopic computation, in the second year of the reign of Adamas Segued, by the grace of the Holy Spirit called Menas. The second division (kefla dagamavi) gives four leaves further on the history of Cladius, and two on that of Menas. Twenty-one leaves, in five sections, relate the annals of Serteza Denghel, or Melec Segued, till his coronation at Axum. The eighth division comprehends five leaves additional history of the same prince, which is finished in the ninth kefel, in eleven folia, being the rest of his transactions from the 24th to the 39th year of his reign.

In this volume there are many curious particulars relating to monarchy, both in its prosperous and declining state. The monkish historians often give abundance of minute facts, without assigning any cause. Many pages are filled with wild declamatory speeches, full of Scripture quotations; in which the reader, expecting to find historical particulars, is completely disappointed. There are not wanting, however, touches of Nature's hand, bold enough to excite surprise, or melt the heart. The construction of an oriental language of itself gives a turgid air to these untutored performances, which, however, have sufficient merit to deserve a place beside the chronicles of our own Gothic ages.

The third volume of Mr Bruce's collection begins with the history of Susneus, in 75 leaves, and 99 chapters. It is the best written of all the chronicles; minute, accurate, and interesting. It has supplied the writer of these Travels with the bulk of the incidents of that reign. The character is small and neat; great attention has been bestowed in correcting the errors of the transcriber, and in removing statements of facts, which were either mistaken or obnoxious. The Romish faith is reprobated wherever it is mentioned; but the edifices, with which the Franks ornamented the kingdom, are described with little art, though with much admiration. The name of Pader Pai is recorded among the artists from India and Portugal, who built the palace and church of Gorgora. The adventures of Susneus, while still a private man, and obliged to skulk in Shoa and the Galla country, are so minutely related, as to give a very lively idea of his distresses, bravery, and enterprising disposition. The volume contains, besides, an epitome of the history of Facilidas, the same as

that in the small Chronicle, and the only record of his reign that is preserved, together with the annals of the fifteen years of Hannes I., sufficiently prolix and minute for so uninteresting a subject. The reign of Facilidas (39 years) is crowded into two leaves; the annals of Hannes occupy 31. Both these are in a more modern hand than the history of Susneus; which is probably coeval with the expulsion of the Jesuits.

One of the most curious papers in the MS. is a grant of lands to the celebrated Ras Sela Christos by his brother, and written by the king's order in this Chronicle of his reign. It is found, Chap. 76, and runs in the following manner:

"Know this, all who now are, and shall come after us, the writing of the appointment, gift, and perpetual fief (goult), which we have granted (goultahana) to our obedient subject (fakadanana) and brother Sela Christos, in the 21st year and fifth month since the Lord made us king, in the year 1617 since the birth of Christ our Lord, and the 15th of the month Miaizy, while we Sultan Segued, king of the kings of Ethiopia, were at Ganeta Yasous; for his much labour and toil on account of our kingdom, and fighting often with many pretenders (waranotch), and putting them to death; for his fighting many times with the Galla, and all the enemies of our realm that have risen at any time, to the days of his killing Weled Gabriel, the traitor, on account of whose practices many were cut off in several places—Finally, we grant and give to him, to be a possession for ever and ever (to generation of generation), the land of Maskal Lahatza, the land of Ledj-ambra *, the land of Cabasa, the land of Coulitch, the land of Shalenna, the land of Tsimaras, and from Emfras to Karooda—and, for all his good will, we likewise give him the value of 100 ounces of gold, that we may establish him while we live, and after we are gone, to his end, perpetually. This grant was made while † Sela

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* In Gojam. See Mr Bruce's particular map, where it is spelled Litchambra.

† The list, though not complete, gives a view of the court then at Ganeta-Yasous in Dembea. For the names of the offices, see Introduction to the History of Abyssinia.

Christos himself was Betwudet, while Tecla-Georgis was Tigre-mechonen; Buco, Tseflam of Damot; Za Christos, Kasmati of Begemder; while Sertsa Christos was Billetanagueta; Habla-selasse, Acab-saat; Bersabahel and Lebusa-Christos were Hadug-ras of the right and left; Melca Christos, Wust-azaje; while Zemo, Meluk za melak and Woldotensa were Likan meuberit (judges); while Azaje Atseko was Lik mameran; Danael Tserage-masery and Azaje Tino ‡, Tsef-tazazi, or secretary. So was written by the command of the king."

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‡ Azaje Tino, so called on account of his stature (Tino, in Galla signifying little), was the royal historiographer, and the composer of the MS. life described above, at least of part of it. When Alphonso, the Portuguese patriarch, showed his books at court, this historian exclaimed "O happy man that can read all these!" The secretary had been a monk, which induced Alphonso to ask him, If that order took any vows? He answered, the religious were accustomed to prostrate themselves before their superior, promising in a loud tone, to preserve their chastity, and, in a low voice, adding, "*as long as you preserve yours.*" This facetious person became a martyr for the Roman Catholic faith, after the death of Susneus.

TRAVELS

TO DISCOVER

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE.

BOOK IV.

ANNALS OF ABYSSINIA,

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL.

CONTINUATION OF THE ANNALS FROM THE DEATH OF SOCINIOS TILL MY ARRIVAL IN ABYSSINIA.

FACILIDAS, OR SULTAN SEGUED.

From 1632 to 1665.

The Patriarch and Missionaries are banished—Seek the Protection of a Rebel—Delivered up to the King, and sent to Masuah—Prince Claudius rebels—Sent to Wechne—Death and Character of the King.

As soon as Facilidas had paid the last honours to his father, he began to compose those disorders which had so long distracted the kingdom from difference of religion. Accordingly he wrote to the patriarch, that,

the Alexandrian faith being now restored, his leaving the kingdom had become indispensible; that he had lately understood, an Abuna, sent for by his father and himself, was now actually on the way, and only deferred his arrival from a resolution not to enter the kingdom till Alphonso and his priests should have left it. He, therefore, commanded the patriarch and fathers, assembled from their several convents in Gojam and Dembea, to retire immediately to Fremona in Tigré, there to wait his further pleasure.

The patriarch endeavoured to parry this, by offering new concessions and indulgencies: But the king informed him that it was too late; and that he wished him to be advised, and fly, while it was time, from greater harm that would otherwise befal him.

It was not long before the patriarch had revenge on Facilidas, for this information of his expected successor in the person of the Abuna. On that very Easter there did arrive a man, whose name was Sela Christos, calling himself Abuna, who performed all the functions of that office, dedicated churches, administered the sacrament, and ordained priests. After continuing in office some months, he was detected by one of his former companions, and found to be a person of very bad character, from Nara, the frontier of Abyssinia, who by profession had been a dealer in horses.

Facilidas then ordered his uncle Sela Christos to be brought before him, received him kindly, and offered him again his riches and employments. That brave man, Christian in every thing but in his hatred and jealousy against his sovereign and nephew, absolutely refused to barter his faith to obtain the greatest good, or avoid the greatest punishment. After repeated trials, all to no purpose, the king, overcome by the instigation of his enemies, banished him to Anabra in Shawada, a low, unwholesome district, among the

mountains of Samen. But hearing that he still corresponded with the Jesuits, and that their common resolution was to solicit Portuguese troops from India, and remembering his former oath, he sent orders to his place of exile to put him to death; and he was, in consequence, hanged upon a cedar-tree.

Tellez, the Portuguese historian, in his collection of martyrs that died for the faith in Abyssinia, has deservedly inserted the name of Sela Christos; but professes that he is ignorant of the time of his death, and under what species of torment he suffered. The only information that I can give is what I have just now written. In the beginning of the year 1634 he was carried to Shawada in chains, and confined upon the mountain Anabra; but no mention is made of any other hardship being put upon him than his being in irons; nor is more usual in that kind of banishment. It was at the end of that year, however, that he was executed in the manner above mentioned; being suspected of having corresponded with the patriarch and Jesuits, and afterwards of inciting his nephew Claudius to rebel; which, it appears, he had meditated long before, and actually did very soon after.

The 9th of March 1633, the king ordered the patriarch to leave Dancaz, and, with the rest of the fathers, to proceed immediately to Fremona, under the conduct of four people of the first consideration; Tecla Georgis, brother of Keba Christos, Tecla Saluse, one of the principal persons in Tigre, and two Azages, men of great dignity at court. These were joined by a party of soldiers belonging to Claudius, brother of the king, supposed to have been in the conspiracy with Sela Christos his uncle, to supplant his brother Facilidas, by the help of the Jesuits and Portuguese troops from India. But as soon as the patriarch had fallen into disgrace, and Sela Christos lost his life,

that prince returned to the church of Alexandria, as did all the other sons of Socinios; after which, Claudius seized for his own use all the lands and effects that he found in Gojam, and was now by the king made governor of Begemder. Under this escort the patriarch and his company arrived at Fremona, in the end of April 1633, after having been often robbed and ill-treated by the way; the guards that were given to defend them conniving with the banditti that came to rob them.

However strictly the fathers observed the precepts of Scripture on other occasions, in this they did not follow the line of conduct prescribed by our Saviour —"And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when you depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet." They were not sheep that went patiently and dumb to the slaughter; and, if their hearts, as they say, were full of love and charity to Abyssinia, it was strangely accompanied with the resolution which they had taken, to send Jerome Lobo, the most famous, because the most bigotted Jesuit of the whole band, first to the viceroy of India, and then to Spain, to solicit an army and fleet, which were to lay all this kingdom in blood.

The king was perfectly advised of all that passed. As he saw that the patriarch endeavoured to gain time, and knew the reson of it; and, as the fathers among them had a considerable quantity of fire-arms, he sent an officer to the patriarch at Fremona, commanding him to deliver up the whole of these, with gunpowder and other ammunition, and to prepare, at the same time, to set out for Masuah. This at first the patriarch refused to do. Nor did Facilidas punish this disobedience by any harsher method, than convincing him mildly of the imprudence and inutility of such a refusal, and of the bad consequences to them-

selves. Upon which the patriarch at last surrendered the articles required to the officer sent by the king; but he resolved very differently as to the other injunction of carrying all his brethren to Masuah. On the contrary, he determined, by every means, to scatter them about the kingdom of Abyssinia, and leave them behind, if he was forced to embark at Masuah, which he, however, resolved to avoid, and resist to the utmost of his power.

In order to do this, it was resolved that he should solicit the Baharnash (John Akay, then in rebellion) to take them under his protection; and for that purpose, to send a number of armed men, on a night appointed, to meet them near Fremona, and carry them in safety from any pursuit of the governor of Tigré. This project, extraordinary as it was, succeeded: Akay promised them his protection. The patriarch and priests, deceiving the guard the king had set upon them, escaped in the night, and joined the soldiers of John Akay, commanded by Tecla Emanuel, who was ready to receive them. They took refuge at Addicota: the soldiers of the guard, though alarmed, not daring to pursue them in the night, as not knowing the number and power of their protectors, and fearing they might fall into some ambush.

It may not be amiss here to take notice, that this John Akay was the very man with whom Tecla Georgis had associated for the murder of Abba Jacob. He was a shrewd man, and had great power by living in the neighbourhood of Sennaar, to which country he could retreat when occasion required. He received the patriarch with great kindness.

Addicota is an inaccessible rock, perpendicular on all sides, excepting where there is a narrow path by which was the entrance. Here the patriarch thought

he could continue in Abyssinia, in defiance of Facilidas, till he should procure succours from India.

It was not, however, long before he found how little dependence there was upon this new protector; for, in the midst of all his schemes, he received orders to remove from Addicota, under pretence that they were not there enough in safety; and Akay transferred them vexatiously from place to place, into hot and unwholesome situations, always under the same pretence, till he had destroyed their healths, and exhausted their strength and patience.

There is but one way of disposing such people to grant a favour; and it was surprising the patriarch did not find this out sooner. Jerome Lobo was sent with a small present in gold, desiring they might have leave to continue in their old habitation, Addicota. Lobo found John Akay very much engaged in a pursuit that some ignorant monks had put into his head. They had made him believe, that there was a treasure hid under a certain mountain which they had shewn him, but that the devil, who guarded it, had constantly hindered his predecessors from acquiring it. At present they had found out, that this devil had gone a journey far off, was become blind and lame, and was, besides, in very great affliction for the death of a son, the only hope of his devilship's family, having now only a daughter remaining, very ugly, lame, squinting, and sickly, and that all these reasons would hinder him from being very anxious about his treasure; and, even supposing he did come, they had an old monk that would exorcise him, a man as eminent for wisdom as for sanctity.

In short, they produced a monk, one of their brethren, above a hundred years old, whom they mounted upon a horse, then tied him to the animal, wrapping him round with black wool, which, it seems,

was the conjuring habit. He was followed by a black cow and some monks, who carried beer, hydromel, and roasted wheat, which was necessary, it seemed, to refresh the devil after his long journey and great affliction, and put him in good humour, if he should appear.

The old monk sung without ceasing, the workmen wrought vigorously, and much earth and stones were removed; at last they discovered some rat, mice, or mole holes, at sight of which a cry of joy was heard from all the parties present.

The old monk sung again; the cow was brought in great hurry and sacrificed, and pieces of it thrown to the rats and mice: Again they fall to work with double keenness, the mole-holes vanish, and a hard rock appears. This being the last obstacle, they fall keenly upon the rock, and the old monk chaunts till he is hoarse with singing; the heat of the sun is excessive; no gold appears; John Akay loses his patience, and asks when it may be seen? The monks lay the whole blame upon him; because, they say, he had not enough of faith. They give over work; with one consent fall to eating the cow, and then disperse.

Father Jerome takes the opportunity of this disappointment to abuse the monks. He presents the Baharnagash with two ounces of gold, and some other trifles, instead of the treasures which he was to get in the mountain: he obtains the request he came to solicit, and the patriarch and fathers return to Addicota.

Facilidas, informed of the asylum afforded to the Jesuits who had fled from Fremona, applied to John Akay, promising him forgivenness of what was past if he would deliver up the priests under his protection. This John Akay declined to do, from motives of delicacy. It was breaking his word to deliver his guests

into the hands of the king; but, by a very strange refinement, he agreed to sell them to the Turks. Accordingly, they were delivered for a sum to the basha of Masuah, who received them with much greater kindness than they had experienced in the Christian country from which they fled.

Two Jesuits were purposely left behind, with the consent of John Akay, unknown to Facilidas, in fervent hopes that some occasion would soon offer of suffering martyrdom for the true faith; and in this expectation they were not long disappointed, all those who were left in Abyssinia having lost their lives by violent deaths, most of them on a gibbet, by order of Facilidas; the last of whom was Bernard Nogeyra.

Facilidas, weary of the obstinacy of these missionaries, uneasy also at the suspicions they created that a number of Portuguese troops would be poured in upon his country by the viceroy of India, concluded a treaty with the bashas of Masuah and Suakem, for preventing any Portuguese passing into Abyssinia, by shutting these ports against them. Not above eight years before, that is, in the year 1624, Socinios had sent a zebra, and several other curious articles, as presents to the basha of Suakem, with a request to him not to obstruct, as the Turks had used to do, the entrance of any Portuguese into his dominions. But those times were now so changed, that both nations, Turks and Abyssinians, had resolved, with one consent, to exclude them all, for their mutual safety, peace, and advantage.

This treaty with the Turks, made by Facilidas, probably gave rise to that calumny of the Jesuits, that, for fear of a return of the Portuguese, the prince had embraced the Mahometan religion, and sent for preceptors from Mocha to instruct him in their tenets. This, I say, if not founded on the treaty I mention,

was destitute of the least shadow of truth; but, like other calumnies then propagated in great number, arose solely from the rage, malice, and heated imaginations of desperate fanatics.

Amidst the general regret this revolution in the church of Ethiopia occasioned at Rome, there were some who thought that the pride, obstinacy, and violence of the Jesuits, the hardness and cruelty of their hearts, in instigating Socinios to perpetual effusion of blood, their encroachments upon, and resistance of the civil power, were faults resulting from the institutions of that particular society, and that these occasioned the miscarriage; that a well grounded aversion to the teachers had created a repugnance to the doctrines preached, and caused the expulsion of the fathers, and the relapse of Abyssinia to the Alexandrian faith. From this persuasion, six capuchins, all of them Frenchmen of the reformed Order of St Francis, were sent from Rome after the death of Nogeyra, by the congregation *De Propaganda Fide*, and these had protections from the Grand Signior.

Two of these attempted to enter Abyssinia by way of the Indian Ocean, that is, from Magadoxa, and were slain by the Galla, after advancing a very short way into the country. Two penetrated into Abyssinia, and were stoned to death. The remaining two, hearing the fate of their companions at Masuah, and not being so violently bent upon a crown of martyrdom as the Portuguese missionaries, prudently returned home, with the account of this bad success.

Three other capuchins were sent after this. It is impossible to judge from their conduct what idea they had formed; for they themselves gave the first information to Facilidas of their intended coming, who thereupon recommended it to the basha of Suakem to receive them according to their merits. On their ar-

rival at Suakem, their heads were cut off by his order; the skins of their heads and faces stripped off, and sent to the king of Abyssinia, that, by their colour, he might know them to be Franks, and, by their tonsure, to be priests. Nor was it possible afterwards to introduce any Catholic missionaries, either during this or the following reign.

Facilidas, having thus provided against being further disturbed by missionaries, and having reduced all his subjects to the obedience of the Alexandrian church, sent again messengers to bring an Abuna from Cairo, while he took the field against Melca Christos, his rival, who continued in arms at the head of the peasants of Lasta, though there was now no longer any pretence that the Alexandrian faith was in danger. Both armies met in Libo, a country of the Galla, where a panic seized the king's troops, his horse flying at the first onset. The royal army being entirely dispersed, Melca Christos pursued his good fortune, and entered the king's palace, took possession of the throne, and was crowned; after which he appointed to all the great places in government, and distributed a largess, or bounty, to his soldiers.

The Portuguese historians say, that this happened at Dancaz, not at Libo. But they should have remembered what they before have said, that an epidemic fever raged in all Dembea, so that the king was not at Dancaz that year. He passed the winter of the preceding one at Dobit, near Begemder.

The memoirs of these missionaries, even when they were in the country, are to be read with great caution, being full of misrepresentations of the manners and characters of particular men, magnifying some actions, extenuating others, and attributing to their favourites services that were really performed by their adversaries. From the coming of Alphonso Mendes, till

they were banished to Masuah, great part of their account is untrue, and the rest very suspicious. After their retiring to India, which is the time we are now speaking of, the whole that they have published is one continued tissue of falsehood and calumny, either hearsay stories communicated to them, as they say, by the remnant of zealots still alive in Abyssinia, or fabrications of their own, invented for particular purposes. In continuing this history, I shall take notice of some of these, though for facts I rely entirely upon the annals of the country, treating, however, the Abyssinian account of the Jesuits' doctrines and behaviour with the same degree of caution.

This forwardness of his rival, Melca Christos, did not discourage Facilidas. Without losing a moment, he sent expresses to Kasmati Dimmo, governor of Samen, to Ras Sela Christos, of Damot, and to his brother Claudius, governor of Begemder, ordering them to march and attack Melca Christos, then acting as sovereign in the king's palace at Libo.

These three generals were not slow in obeying the commands of Facilidas. They surrounded Melca Christos before he expected them, and forced him to a battle, in which he was defeated, and lost his whole army. He himself, fighting manfully at the head of his troops, was slain hand to hand by Cosmas, a soldier of Kasmati Claudius, the king's brother.

Jerome Lobo mentions Facilidas's bad success against the Gallas and Agows, as an instance of divine vengeance which pursued him. But if the approbation or disapprobation of heaven is to be appealed to in this reign as a proof of the justness of the measures taken, we must be obliged to say, the cause of the Jesuits was not the cause of heaven. If we except the temporary advantage gained over Facilidas, and the accident that happened to his army at Lasta, perpetual

victory had attended the wars in which this prince was engaged; for, so far was he from being unfortunate this campaign against the Agows, that, on the 9th of February, 1636, he marched from Libo into Gojam, and totally defeated the two great tribes, Azena and Zeegam. After which he sent his army with Kasmati Melca Bahar, who coming up with the Galla, a great body of whom had made an incursion into Gojam, he totally overthrew them, and passing the Nile into their country, laid it waste, and returned with a great number of cattle, and multitudes of women and children to be sold as slaves.

The king then returned to Begemder, and took up his head-quarters at Gonsala; but hearing soon after that the Abuna Marcus was arrived, he quitted that place, and came to meet him in Gondar.

The next year, which was the fifth of his reign, and the first of the coming of Abuna Marcus, he again fought with the Agows, and beat the Denguis, Hancasha, and the Zeegam, and passed that winter in Gafat; nor was he ever unfortunate with the Agows or Galla. But a misfortune happened this year (the sixth of his reign) which very much affected the whole kingdom. The people of Lasta seemed to grow more inveterate after the defeat they had received under Melca Christos, and instead of that prince, slain in battle, they appointed his son, a young man of good hopes, to succeed his father in his aspiring pretensions.

Facilidas, trusting to his former reputation acquired in these mountains in the time of his father, on the 3d of March, 1638, advanced with a large army into Lasta, with a design to bring these peasants to a battle. But the rebels, growing wise by their losses, no longer chose to trust themselves on the plain, but, retiring to the strongest posts, fortified them so judiciously,

that, without risking any loss themselves, they cut off all supplies or provisions coming to the king's army.

It happened at that time the cold was so excessive, that almost the whole army perished amidst the mountains; great part from famine, but a greater still from cold, a very remarkable circumstance in these latitudes. Lasta is barely 12° from the Line, and it was now the equinox in March; so that the sun was but 12° from being in the zenith of Lasta, and there was in the day twelve hours of sun. Yet here is an example of an army, not of foreigners, but natives, perishing with cold in their own country, when the sun is no further than 12° from being vertical, or from being directly over their heads; a strong proof, as I have often remarked, that there is no way of judging by the degrees of heat in the thermometer, what effect that degree of heat or cold is to have upon the human body.

In the eighth year of the reign of Facilidas, Claudius, governor of Begemder, his brother, revolted and joined the rebels of Lasta. It seems that this prince had been long encouraged by the Jesuits, and his uncle Sela Christos, in the expectation of succeeding his father, Socinios, and supplanting Facilidas, his brother, in the kingdom. But, after the banishment of the Jesuits, and the death of Sela Christos, Facilidas thinking, these bad counsellers being removed, he would continue firm in his duty, and willing to disbelieve the whole that had been reported of his designs, made him governor of Begemder.

It happened, however, that this very year two Abunas arrived from Egypt, one by way of Sennaar, the other by Dancali. Upon inquiry it was found, that Abba Michael, the latter of these Abunas, had been sent for by Kasmati Claudius, in expectation that he was to be on the throne by the time of his Abuna's

arrival. This implied clearly that the king's death was agreed on. Claudius, without attempting a vindication, or awaiting the discussion of this step, fled to Lasta, and joined Laeca, son of Melca Christos, a youth then at the head of the rebels.

Facilidas banished Abba Michael to Serke, a Mahometan town in the way to Sennar, and admitted Abba Johannes, whom he himself had sent for from Cairo, into the office of Abuna.

Soon after this, Claudius was surprised and taken prisoner, and brought to the king, and, though stained in a high degree with ingratitude, treason, and intended fratricide, he could not be brought to order his execution; but, like a wise and merciful prince, reflecting on the ancient usages of the empire, and how much royal blood might be daily saved by sequestering the descendents of the imperial family upon the mountain, he chose that of Wechne in Belessen, which has served ever since for that purpose.

This is the third mountain within the reach of written history, first chosen, and then reprobated, as a state prison for all the males of the royal family, excepting the one seated upon the throne.

This interruption of the imprisonment of the princes for a time, and the resuming it again for another period, has led the Portuguese writers, very little acquainted with the history or constitution of this country, into various disputes and difficulties, which I shall fully explain and reconcile in their proper places. It is sufficient at present to observe, that Claudius was sent into exile to the mountain of Wechne, and that he was the first prince banished thither, where he lived for many years.

The king, finding that nothing material pressed at home, marched into Gojam to Enzagedem, whence he sent Ras Bela Christos, against the Shangalla, N.

W. of the country of the Agows. These people being put upon their guard by their neighbours, all disaffected to the king, contrived to place themselves in ambush so judiciously, that Bela Christos, marching in security into their country, was surrounded by the Shangalla, whom he thought yet at a distance. Great part of his troops was slain by the arrows of the enemy, who, from their caves and holes in the mountain, poured their missile weapons, stones, and arrows, on the troops, at so small a distance, that every one had effect, though above the reach of swords, and lances, or such common weapons; others were overpowered by large bodies of men sallying from the thickets, and fighting them firmly foot to foot. Many officers were that day slain; among the rest Alzague and Petros, two persons of great distinction in the palace. But the king, however afflicted for the loss of his men, well knew that this defeat would have no other consequences; so returned to his capital, with the resolution to make another vigorous effort against Lasta.

The manner in which this expedition was prevented cannot but give us a high idea of Facilidas. Laeca, at the head of an army of veteran troops, whose affection he never had occasion to doubt, thought it safer to trust to the generosity of a king, who had slain his father in battle, than to the acquiring a crown that was not his, by persevering any longer in rebellion. Accordingly he surrendered himself, without condition, to Facilidas, who immediately committed him to prison; which seeming severity, however, meant nothing further, than to shew him the lenity which followed was entirely his own, and not suggested to him by the officiousness of courtiers; for no sooner was he arrived at Gondar, than he sent for Laeca from prison, received him not only kindly, but with great marks of distinction; and, instead of ba-

nishing him to Wechne, as he did his own brother Claudius, and which, as being of the blood-royal, should have been his destination likewise, the king entered into a kind of treaty with Laeca, by which he gave him large possessions in Begemder near Lasta, and married him to his daughter Theoclea, by whom, however, he had no children, but lived long, and died at last, in constant friendship and confidence with Facilidas.

Except the events which I have already recorded, there is nothing farther in this long reign worthy of being insisted upon; the early inroads of the Galla, in plundering parties, and the seditions and revolts of the Agows from the oppression and extortion of their governors, were such as we find in every reign; and in all these Facilidas was victorious, whilst the Hancasha and Zeegam were greatly weakened in these campaigns.

Facilidas was taken ill at Gondar, in the end of October, of a disease which, from its first appearance, he thought would prove mortal. He, therefore, sent for his eldest son Hannes, whom he constantly kept with him, and who was now of age to govern, and recommended to him his kingdom, and the persevering in the ancient religion. He died the 30th of September 1665, in great peace and composure of mind, and was buried at Azazo.

If we are obliged to give his father the preference, from the greater variety of trials which he underwent, we must in justice allow, that, after his father, Facilidas was the greatest king that ever sat upon the Abyssinian throne. He had every good quality necessary to constitute a great prince, without any alloy or mixture, that, upon so much provocation as he had, might have misled him to be a bad one. He was calm, dispassionate, and courteous in his behaviour. In the

very difficult part he had to act between his father and the nation, the necessities of the times had taught him a degree of reserve, which, if it was not natural, was not therefore the less useful or agreeable to him. He was in his own person the bravest soldier of his time, and always exposed himself in proportion as the occasion was important.

To this were added all the qualities of a good general, in which character he seems to have equalled his father Socinios, who else was universally allowed to be the first of his time. Fierce and violent in battle, he was backward in shedding blood after it. Though an enemy to the Catholic religion, yet, from duty to his father, he lived with the patriarch and Jesuits upon so familiar a footing, that they confess themselves it was not from any part of his behaviour to them they ever could judge him an enemy. He was most remarkable for an implicit submission to his father's commands; and, upon this principle, fought in favour of the Catholic religion against his own friends and persuasion, because such were the orders of his sovereign. He was of a very mild and pleasant temper, as appeared by his behaviour to Laeca Christos, to his brother Claudius, to his uncle Sela Christos, and to the patriarch and Jesuits.

It is true, that, of these last, Sela Christos, and many of the Jesuits, were put to death in his reign; but this was not till they had experienced repeated acts of mercy and forgiveness; still persisting in inveterate rebellion against government, they were at last justly cut off, as traitors and rebels, by the civil power, in the very act of their conspiracy against the life of the king, and constitution of the country.

There is published by Tellez, a letter of Alphonso Mendes, written, as is falsely said, from Masuah, where it is dated, but truly from Goa. If, as the

patriarch pretends, he wrote it from Masuah, it is another proof of this prince's clemency, that he ever suffered the author of such an indecent libel to return to India in peace. It is well known, that, on the first requisition of Facilidas, the Turks would have delivered the patriarch into his hands; and every one that reads it must allow, such language, from a low-born priest to a king, deserved every exemplary punishment offended royalty could inflict. It would not have been mild, had such liberty been taken by a stranger in his native country, Portugal.

The patriarch accuses Facilidas of the crime committed by Absalom, which is, I suppose, debauching his father's wives and concubines. But, unluckily for the truth of this story, we have the Jesuit's own testimony, that Socinios had put away his wives and concubines before he embraced the Catholic religion; so at his father's death this was impossible, unless he could commit incest with his own mother, who was at that time a woman near sixty. But we shall suppose that they existed, were never married, and, at the time of their being put away, they were eighteen years of age at an average. The king put them away in the year 1621; and, therefore, in the year 1634, they would be thirty years of age; and any body that has seen the effects that number of years has upon Abyssinian beauty, must confess they could be no great temptation to a prince, especially in such a country as Abyssinia.

The next calumny mentioned in this libel is, the murder of his brother Claudius, nay, of all his brothers. Now we have seen, in the history of his reign, that Claudius had fairly forfeited his life by a meditated fratricide, and by an overt act of rebellion in which he was taken prisoner. Yet so mild and placable was Facilidas, that he refused to put him to

death, but sent him prisoner to the mountain of Wechne, and mercifully revived the ancient usage of banishing the princes of the blood royal to the mountain, instead of executing them, which had been the practice to his time, and had occasioned the death of above sixty of these unfortunate princes within the last hundred years.

To mount Wechne he also sent his own son David, and with him all his brothers; and, so far from being murdered, we shall find them mostly alive attending an extraordinary festival made for their sakes by Facilidas's grandson; an accident so rare, that it seems Providence had permitted it in favour and vindication of truth and innocence, and to stamp the lie upon the patriarch's scandalous aspersions.

The third falsehood is, that Facilidas turned Mahometan, and got doctors from Mocha to instruct him in the Koran. We have already seen what gave rise to this, if it indeed had any foundation at all; but it is a well-known fact, that, though he governed the church, during a whole reign, mildly and judiciously, without any mark of bigotry, never were two princes better affected to the Alexandrian church than Facilidas and his son; and never were two that had better reason, having both seen the disorders that other religions had occasioned.

We see, throughout all this piece of the patriarch's, a self-sufficient mind, gratifying itself by disgorging its passion and malice. If Alphonso Mendes had no regard, as it seems indeed he had not; if he had no reverence to higher powers, such as scripture had taught him to have; if he was too enlightened, or too infatuated, to take our Saviour's precepts for his rule, and, shaking the dust of Abyssinia from his feet, remit them to a judge who will, at his own time, sepa-

rate good from evil, still he should have had, at least, a brotherly love and charity for those unfortunate people who were to fall into Facilidas's hands; and we cannot reasonably suppose, but that the constant butcheries committed by the Turks afterwards upon the Catholic priests, wild enough to enter at Masuah and Suakem, were the fruits of the calumnious, intemperate libel of the patriarch.

After the death of the last missionary, Bernard Nogeyra, no intelligence arrived of what was doing in Abyssinia, excepting from the Dutch settlements of Batavia, where Abyssinian factors, or merchants, had arrived; and where the industrious Mr Ludolf, very much engaged in the history of this country, and who spared no pains, maintained a correspondence; and thence he was informed that Facilidas had died after a long and prosperous reign, and had left his kingdom in peace to his son.

This intelligence alarmed the zeal of two great champions of the Jesuits; the one M. le Grande, late secretary to the French embassy of Portugal; and the other M. Piques, a member of the Sorbonne, a very confused dull disputant upon the difference of religion.

These two worthies, without any proof or intelligence, but their own warm and weak imaginations, fell violently upon poor Ludolf, accusing him of falsehood, partiality, and prevarication; and, right or wrong, they would have Facilidas plunged up to the neck in troubles, wading through labyrinths of misfortunes, conspiracies, and defeats, certainly dead, or about to die some terrible death by the vengeance of heaven; and this ridiculous report is unjustly spread abroad by all the zealots of those times. *Fata obstant;* —truth will out. The annals of the country, written

without a regard to either party, state, that, in the long reign of Facilidas; notwithstanding the calamitous state in which his father left him the empire, very few misfortunes are reported to have happened either to himself or lieutenants.

HANNES I. OR ŒLAFE SEGUED.

From 1665 to 1680.

Bigotry of the King—Disgusts his son Yasous, who flies from Gondar.

IF this prince succeeded to his kingdom in peace, he had the address still to keep it so. He was not naturally averse to war, though, besides two feeble attempts upon Lasta, and one against the Shangalla, all without material consequences, no military expedition was undertaken in his time; and no rebellion or competitor, so frequent in other reigns.

Hannes seems to have had the seeds of bigotry in his disposition. From the beginning of his reign he commanded the Mahometans to eat no other flesh but what had been killed by Christians; and gathered together the Catholic books, which the Jesuits had translated into the Ethiopic language, and burned them in a heap. Much of his attention was given to church matters, and, in regulating these, he seems to have employed most of his time. He deposed the Abuna Christadulus, appointed by his father, and in his place put the Abuna Sanuda.

This last measure seems to have displeased his eldest son Yasous, who fled from the palace one night, and passed the Nile; and, though he was followed by Kasmati Aserata Christos, he was not overtaken,

but staid some time in his sister's house, and then returned to Gondar at the request of his father.

A convocation of the clergy, the second in this reign, was now held, and great heats and divisions followed among two orders of monks, those of Eustathius and those of Debra Libanos. The king seems to have assisted at all these debates, and to have contented himself with holding the balance in his hands, without declaring for either party. But these altercations and disputes could not satisfy the active spirit of his son, who again fled from his father and from Gondar, but was overtaken at the river Bashilo and brought back to the palace, where he found his father ill.

Hannes died the 19th of July, and was buried at Tedda, after having reigned 15 years. He seems, from the scanty memorials of his long reign, to have been a weak prince; but, perhaps, if the circumstances of the times were fully known, he may have been a wise one.

YASOUS I.

From 1680 to 1704.

Brilliant Expedition of the king to Wechne—Various campaigns against the Agows and Galla—Comet appears—Expedition against Zeegam and the Eastern Shangalla—Poncet's Journey—Murat's Embassy—Du Roule's Embassy—Du Roule assassinated at Sennaar—The king is assassinated.

YASOUS succeeded his father with the approbation of the whole kingdom. He had twice, in Hannes's

life-time, absconded from the palace; and this was interpreted as implying an impatience to reign. The cause was probably a difference of manners; his father being extremely bigotted, sordid, and covetous: for he never, in those elopements, pretended to make a party contrary to his father's interest, nor shewed the least inclination to give either the army or the people a favourable impression of himself, to the disadvantage of the king. There was, besides, a difference in religious principles. Yasous had a great predilection for the monks of Debra Libanos, or the high church; while Hannes had done every thing in his power to instil into his son a prepossession in favour of those of Abba Eustathius. An immediate change in the government of the church was therefore the first step of the new administration.

On the 7th of July 1680 he was proclaimed king; the next day he deposed the Acab Saat Constantius, and gave his place to Asera Christos. He then called a council of the clergy on the 27th of September, when he deposed Itchegue Tzaga Christos, and in his room named Cyriacus.

It was now the time that, according to custom, he was to make his profession in regard to the difference I have formerly mentioned, that subsists between the two parties about the incarnation of Christ. But this he refused to do in the present state of the church, as there was then no certain Abuna in Abyssinia. For Hannes, before he died, had written to the patriarch of Alexandria to depose both Abuna Christodulus and Marcus, who, in case of death, was to have succeeded him, and this under pretence that he had varied in his faith between the two contending parties.

Hannes, therefore, desired the patriarch to appoint Abuna Sanuda, a man known to be devoted to the monks and tenets of St Eustathius; whereas the other two priests were supposed to be inclined to the

monks of Debra Libanos. Yasous told his clergy that he would not suffer Sanuda to be elected; and the assembly, with little opposition, conformed to the sentiments of the king, who sent immediately thereupon to Cairo, demanding peremptorily the appointment of Marcus, and declaring his resolution to admit no other. He then ordered the church of Tecla Haimanout to be consecrated with great solemnity; he repaired and adorned it with much magnificence, and endowed it with lands, which increased its revenue very considerably.

These two circumstances (especially the last) shewed distinctly to the whole kingdom his affection for the high church, as explicitly as any proclamation could have done. And in this he continued steady during his whole life, notwithstanding the many provocations he met with from that restless body of men.

He next proceeded to appoint Anastasius (then governor of Amhara) to be Ras, or lieutenant-general, in his whole kingdom, allowing him also to keep his province of Amhara. In this he shewed a wisdom and penetration that gained him the good opinion of every one; for Anastasius was a man advanced in years, of great capacity and experience, and of a most unblemished character among his neighbours, who, in all their own affairs, had recourse to, and were determined by, his counsels.

The king then undertook a journey of a very extraordinary nature, and such as Abyssinia had never before seen. Attended only by his nobility, of whom a great number had flocked to him, he sat down at the foot of the mountain of Wechne, and ordered all the princes of the royal family who were banished, and confined there, to be brought to him.

During the last reign, the mountain of Wechne, and those forlorn princes that lived upon it, had been, as it were, totally forgotten. Hannes having sons of

an age fit to govern, and his eldest son Yasous living below with his father, no room seemed to remain for attempting a revolution, by the young candidates escaping from the mountain. This oblivion to which they were consigned, melancholy as it was, proved the best state that these unhappy prisoners could have wished; for to be much known, for either good or bad qualities, did always at some period become fatal to the individuals. Punishment always followed inquiries after a particular prince; and all messages, questions, or visits, at the instance of the king, were constantly forerunners of the loss of life, or amputation of limbs, to these unhappy exiles. To be forgotten, then, was to be safe; but this safety carried very heavy distress along with it. Their revenues were embezzled by their officers or keepers, and ill paid by the king; and the sordid temper of Hannes had often reduced them all to the danger of perishing with hunger and cold.

Yasous, as he was well acquainted with all these circumstances, so he was, in his nature and disposition, as perfectly willing to repair the injuries that were past, and prevent the like in future. Nothing tended so much to conciliate the minds of the people to their sovereign as this behaviour of Yasous.

In the midst of his relations there now appeared (as risen from the dead) Claudius, son of Socinios, the first exile who was sent to the mountain of Wechne by his brother Facilidas, grandfather of Yasous. This was the prince who, as we have already stated, was fixed upon by the Jesuits to succeed his father, and govern that country when converted to the Romish religion by their intrigues, and conquered by the arms of the Portuguese. This was the prince who, to make their enemies appear more odious, these Jesuits have asserted was slain by his brother Facilidas; one instance by which we may judge of the justice of the

other charges laid against that humane, wise, and virtuous king, whose only crime was an inviolable attachment to the religion and constitution of his country, and the just abhorrence he most reasonably had, as an independent prince, to submit the prerogatives of his crown, and the rights of his people, to the blind controul of a foreign prelate.

There came from the mountain, also, the sons of Facilidas, with their families; and his own brothers, Ayto Theophilus, and Ayto Claudius, sons of his father Hatze Hannes. The sight of so many noble relations, some advanced in years, some in the flower of their youth, and some yet children, all, however, in rags, and almost naked, made such an impression on the young king, that he burst into tears. Nor was his behaviour to the respective degrees of them less proper or engaging. To the old he paid that reverence and respect due to parents; to those about his own age, a kind and liberal familiarity; while he bestowed upon the young ones caresses and commendations, sweetened with the hopes that they might see better times.

His first care was to provide them all plentifully with apparel and every necessary. He dressed his brothers like himself, and his uncles still more richly. He then divided a large sum of money among them all.

In the month of December, which is the pleasantest season of the whole year, the sun being moderately hot, the sky constantly clear and without a cloud, all the court was encamped under the mountain, and the inferior sort strewed along the grass. All were treated at the expence of the king, passing the day and night in continual festival. "It is but right," said the king, "that I should pay for a pleasure, so great that none of my predecessors ever dared to taste it." And of all that noble assembly, none seemed to enjoy it

more sincerely than he. All pardons solicited for criminals at this time were granted. In this manner having spent a whole month, before his departure the king called for the deftar (*i. e.* the treasury-book), in which the account of the sum allowed for the maintenance of these prisoners is stated; and having inquired strictly into the expenditure, and cancelled all grants that had been made of any part of that sum to others, and provided in future for the full, as well as yearly payment of it, he, for his last act, gave to the governor of the mountain a large accession of territory, to make him ample amends for the loss of the dues he was understood to be intitled to from that revenue. After this, he embraced them all, assuring them of his constant protection; and, mounting his horse, he took the keeper along with him, leaving all the royal family at their liberty at the foot of the mountain.

The last mark of confidence, more than all the rest, touched the minds of that noble troop, who hurried every man with his utmost speed to restore themselves voluntarily to their melancholy prison, imputing every moment of delay as a step towards treason and ingratitude to their munificent, compassionate, and magnanimous benefactor. All their way was moistened with tears flowing from sensible and thankful hearts; and all the mountain resounded with prayers for the long life and prosperity of the king, and that the crown might never leave the lineal descendents of his family. It was very remarkable, that, during this long reign, though he was constantly involved in war, no competitor from the mountain ever appeared in breach of those vows they had so voluntarily undertaken.

There was another great advantage the king reaped by this generous conduct. All the most powerful and considerable people in the kingdom had an opportu-

nity, at one view, to see each individual of the royal family that was capable of wearing the crown; and all with one voice agreed, upon the comparison made, that, if they had been then assembled to elect a king, the choice would not have fallen upon any but the present.

Though the country of the Agows of Damot is generally plain and laid out in pasture, each tribe has some mountain to which, upon the alarm of an enemy, they retire with their flocks. The Galla, being their neighbours on the other side of the Nile to the south, and the Shangalla in the low country immediately to the west, these natural fortresses are frequently of the greatest use during the incursions of both.

They alone, of all the nations of Abyssinia, have found it their interest so far to cultivate their neighbours the Shangalla, that there are places set apart in which both nations can trade with each other in safety; where the Agows sell copper, iron, beads, skins, or hides, and receive an immense profit in gold; for, below these, to the south and west, is the gold country nearest Abyssinia, none of that metal being anywhere found in Abyssinia itself.

Yasous, from this country of the Agows, descended into that of the Shangalla; where, conforming to the ancient custom of Abyssinia, he hunted the elephant and rhinoceros, the first ordinary expedition in the kings his predecessors, reigns, but the second in his; the first having been (as before stated) spent in charity and mercy, much more nobly, at the foot of the mountain of Wechne.

Yasous is reported to have been the most graceful and dexterous horseman of his time. He distinguished himself in this hunting, as much for his address and courage against the beasts, as he had, for a short while before, done by his affability, generosity, and

benevolence, amidst his own family. All was praise, all was enthusiasm, wherever the young king presented himself; the ill-boding monks and hermits had not yet dared to foretel evil, but every common mouth predicted this would be an active, vigorous, and glorious reign, without being thought by this to have laid any pretension to the gift of prophecy.

It was now the second year of his reign, when the king took the field with a small, but very well chosen army. The Edjow and Woolo, two of the most powerful tribes of southern Galla, taking advantage of the absence of Ras Anastasius, had entered Amhara by a pass, on the side of which is situated Melec Shimfa, one of the principal towns of the province.

The king, leaving old Anastasius to the government of Gondar, took upon himself the relief of Amhara; and, being joined by all the troops in his way, he arrived at Melec Shimfa before the Galla had any intelligence of him. The Galla always chuse for their residence a very level country, because they are now become all horsemen. The country of Amhara, on the contrary, is full of high mountains, and only accessible by certain narrow passes. The king, therefore, instead of marching directly to the enemy, passed above them, and left them still advancing, burning the villages and churches in the country below. He then took possession of the pass (through which he knew they must retreat) with a strong body of troops; and filled the entrance of the defile, which was very rugged ground, with fusileers, and his best foot armed with lances: after this, he separated his horse into two divisions; and, reserving one half to himself, gave the other to Kasmati Demetrius. He then placed the troops, conducted by himself, in a wood, about half a mile from the entrance of the pass, and ordered Demetrius to fall upon the Galla briskly

on the plain, but to retreat as if terrified by their numbers, and to make the best of his way then to the pass in the mountains.

Demetrius, finding the enemy's parties scattered wide and wasting the country, fell upon them, and slew many, till he had arrived near the middle of their body; when the Galla, used to such expeditions, poured in from all sides, and presently united. Demetrius, surrounded on every side, was slain, fighting to the last in the most desperate manner; and his party, much diminished in number, fled in a manner that could not be mistaken for stratagem. They were closely pursued, and followed into the pass by the Galla, who thought they had thus entirely cut them off from Amhara. But they were soon received by a close fire from the foot among the bushes, and by the lances that mingled with them from every side of the mountain.

The king, upon the first noise of the musquetry, advanced quickly with his horse, and met the Galla, in the height of their confusion, flying back again into the plain. Here they fell an easy sacrifice to the fresh troops led by Yasous, and to the peasants, exasperated by the havoc they before had made in the country. Of the enemy, about 6000 men fell this day on the field; a few were brought to Gondar, and in contempt sold for slaves. Few on the king's side were slain, excepting those that fell with Demetrius, the account of whose death the king heard without any signs of regret:—"I told the man (says the king), that he should shew himself, and retire; if I had wanted a victory, I would have led the army in person; I march against the Galla, not as a king, but as an executioner, because my aim is to extirpate them."

Although Yasous was stedfast in his own opinion as to his religion, or, as it may be more properly cal-

led, the disputes and quibbles with the monks concerning it, yet he suffered each sect to enjoy its own, and, probably, in his heart, he perfectly despised both.

The monks, however, were far from possessing any such spirit of toleration. They considered the deposing of Acab Saat Constantius, and the Itchegue Tzaga Christos, as a declaration of dislike the king entertained towards their party. They bore with great impatience and indignation, that Abuna Sanuda, who was once their zealous partizan in the time of Hannes, should now suddenly change his sentiments, and declare implicitly for those of the king, and thereby increase both the number and the consequence of their adversaries. They declared that they would suffer every thing rather than live under a king who shewed himself so openly a favourer of Debra Libanos, though it was now but their turn; having in the last reign had a king more partial, and more attached to St Eustathius, than ever Yasous was to any set of monks whatever.

The ringleaders in all these seditious declarations were Abba Tebedin, superior of the monastery of Gondga, and Kasmati Wali of Damot, by origin a Galla. These two turbulent men, having first drawn over to their party the Agows and province of Damot, passed over the Nile to Goodero and Basso, whom they joined, and then proclaimed king one Isaac, grandson of Socinios, a prince who was never sent to the mountain, but whose predecessors, being at liberty when Facilidas first banished his brothers and children to Wechne, had fled to the Galla, and there remained in obscurity, waiting the juncture which now happened to declare his royal descent, and offer himself for king.

The Galla, who sought but a pretence for invading Abyssinia, readily embraced this opportunity, and

swarmed to him on all sides. His army, in a very short time, was exceedingly numerous; and the Agows and all Damot were ready to join him when he should repass the Nile. This revolt was indeed likely to have proved general, but for the activity and diligence of the king, who, on the first intelligence, put himself so suddenly in motion, that he was on the banks of the Nile, before the Galla, on the one side, were ready for their junction with the confederates on the other.

The king's presence imposed upon the Agows and the rebels of Damot; so that they let him pass quietly over the Nile into the country of the Galla, hoping that, as their designs were not discovered, he might again return through their country in peace if victorious over the Galla; but, if he was beaten, they then were ready to intercept him.

But the Galla, who expected that they would have had to fight with an army already fatigued and half-ruined, by an action with the Agows on the other side of the river, no sooner saw it pass the Nile unmolested in full force, than they began to think how far it was from their interest to make their country a seat of war, when so little profit was to be expected. On the approach, therefore, of the king's army, many of them deserted to it, and made their peace with him. The few that remained faithful to Isaac were dispersed after very little resistance; and he himself being taken prisoner, and brought before the king, was given up to the soldiers, who put him to death in his presence. On the king's side, no person of consideration was slain but Kasmati Mazire, and very few on the part of the enemy.

This year, 1685, the fifth of Yasous's reign, there was no military expedition. He had pardoned Abba Tebedin, and Kasmati Wali; and the monks again

desired an assembly of the clergy, which was granted. But the king seeing, at its first meeting, that it was to produce nothing but wrangling and invectives, with great calmness and resolution told the assembly, "That their disputes were of a nature so confused and unedifying, that he questioned much their being really founded in Scripture; and the rather so, because the patriarch of Alexandria seemed neither to know, nor concern himself about them; nor was the Abuna, at his first coming, ever instructed on any one of these points. If they were, however, founded in Scripture, one of them was confessedly in the wrong; and, if so, he doubted it might be the case with both: That he had, therefore, come to a resolution to name several of the best qualified persons of both parties, who, in the presence of the Itchegue and Abuna, might inspect the books, and from them settle some premises that might be hereafter accepted and admitted as data by both."

This being assented to, the very next year he ordered two of the priests of Debra Libanos, then at Gondar, together with Abba Tebedin, Cosmas of Aruana, the Abuna Sanuda, and the Itchegue, forthwith to repair to Debra Mariam, an island in the lake Tzana, where, sequestered from the world, they might discuss their several opinions, and settle some points admissible by both sides. After which, without giving any opportunity for reply, he dissolved the assembly, and took the field with his army.

The king, though perfectly informed of the part that the whole province of Damot had taken in the rebellion of Isaac, as also great part of the Agows, but most of all that tribe called Zeegam, had so well dissembled, that most of them believed he was ignorant of their fault; and all of them, that he had no thoughts of punishing them; for he had returned

through Damot, after the defeat of Isaac, without shewing any mark of anger, or suffering his troops to commit the smallest hostility. He now passed in the same peaceable manner through the country of Zeegam, intending to attack the Shangalla of Geeza and Wumbarea.

These two tribes are little known. Like the other Shangalla, they are Pagans; but worship the Nile and a certain tree, and have a language peculiar to themselves. They are woolly-headed, and of the deepest black; very tall and strong, straighter and better made about the legs and joints than the other blacks; their foreheads narrow, their cheek-bones high, their noses flat, with wide mouths, and very small eyes. With all this they have an air of cheerfulness and gaiety which renders them more agreeable than other blacks. Their women are very amorous, and sell at a much greater price than other blacks of the sex.

This country is bounded, on the south, by Metchakel; on the west, by the Nile; the east, by Serako, part of Guesgue, and Kuara; and, on the north, by Belay, Guba, and the Hamidge * of Sennaar. They make very frequent inroads, and surprise the Agows, whose children they sell at Guba to the Mahometans, who traffic there for gold and slaves, and get iron and coarse cotton-cloths in return. Their country is full of woods, and their manner of life the same as has been already described in speaking of the other tribes.

The Geeza live close upon the Nile, to which river they give their own name. It is also called Geeza by the Agows, in the small district of Geesh, where it rises from its source. They never have yet made

* A name of the black Pagans bordering on Sennaar to the south-west.

peace with Abyssinia, are governed by the heads of families, and live separately for the sake of hunting, and for this reason are easily conquered. The men are naked, having a cotton rag only about their middle. The nights are very cold, and they lie round great fires; but the fly is not so dangerous here as to the eastward, so that goats, in a small number, live here. Their arms are bows, lances, and arrows; large wooden clubs, with knobs, nearly as big as a man's head, at the end of them; their shields are oval. They worship the Nile, but no other river, as I have said before; it is called Geëza, which, in their language, signifies the first Maker, or Creator. They imagine its water is a cure for most diseases.

East of the Geesa is Wumbarea, which reaches to Belay. The king fell first on the Geeza, part of whom he took, and the rest he dispersed. He then returned to the right through Wumbarea, and met with some resistance in the narrow passes in the mountains, in one of which Kasmati Koste (one of his principal officers), a man of low birth, but raised by his merit to his present rank, was slain by an arrow.

The king then repassed the Agows of Zeegam, in the same peaceable manner in which he came, and then marched on without giving any cause of suspicion, taking up his quarters at Ibaba. It was here he had appointed an assembly of the clergy to meet, before whom the several delegates, chosen to consider the controverted points, and find some ground for a reconciliation, were to make their report. The Abuna, Itchegue, and all those who, for this purpose, were shut up in Debra Mariam, appeared before the king. But however amicably things had been carried on while they were shut up in the island, the usual warmth and violence prevailed before the assembly. Ayto Christos,

Abba Welled Christos of Debra Libanos, on one side, and Tebedin and Cosmos on the other fell, roundly, and without preface, upon a dispute about the incarnation, so that the affair from argument was likely to turn to sedition.

The turbulent Tebedin, leaving the matter of religion wholly apart, inveighed vehemently against the retirement to Debra Mariam, which he loudly complained of as banishment. Ras Anastasius, and Abuna Sanuda, reproved him sharply for the freedom with which he taxed this measure of the king; and in this they were followed by many of the wiser sort on both sides. Immediately after the assembly, the king ordered Tebedin to be put in irons, and sent to a mountainous prison. He then returned to Gondar.

This year, the 9th of Yasous's reign, there appeared a comet, remarkable for its size, and the fiery brightness of its body, and for the prodigious length and distinctness of its tail. It was first taken notice of at Gondar, two days before the feast of St Michael, on which day the army takes the field. A sight so uncommon alarmed all sorts of people; and the prophets, who had kept themselves within very moderate bounds during this whole reign, now thought that it was incumbent upon them to distinguish themselves, and be silent no longer. Accordingly they foretold, from this phenomenon, and published everywhere as a truth infallibly and immutably pre-ordained, that the present campaign was to exhibit a scene of carnage and bloodshed, more terrible and more extensive than any thing that ever had appeared in the annals of Ethiopia; that these torrents of blood, which were everywhere to follow the footsteps of the king, were to be stopped by his death, which was to happen before he ever returned again to Gondar; and, as the object of the

king's expedition was still a secret, these alarming presages gained a great deal of credit.

But it was not so with Yasous, who, notwithstanding he was importuned, by learned men of all sorts, to put off his departure for some days, absolutely refused, answering always such requests with irony and derision: "Pho! Pho! says he, you are not in the right; we must give the comet fair play; use him well, or he will never appear again; and then idle people and old women will have nothing to amuse themseves with."

He accordingly left Gondar at the time he had appointed; and he was already arrived at Amdabar, a few days distance from the capital, when an express brought him word of his mother's death; on which he immediately marched back to Gondar, and buried her in the island of Mitraha with all possible magnificence, and with every mark of sincere grief.

Though the prophets had not succeeded completely in what they foretold, they nevertheless kept a good countenance. No blood was shed, nor did the king die before he returned to Gondar; but his mother died when he was away, and that was much the same thing; for they contended, that it was not a great mistake, from the bare authority of a comet, to err only in the sex of the person; a queen for a king being very near calculation. As for the bloody story, and the king's death, they said they had mistaken the year in computing, but that it still was to happen (when it pleased God) *at some other time.*

Every body agreed that these explanations were the best possible, excepting the king, who perceived a degree of malice in foretelling his death, and certain loss of his army, just at the instant he was taking the field. But he disguised his resentment under strong irony, with which he attacked these diviners incessant-

ly. He had inquired accurately into the day of his mother's death: "How is it," says he to his chaplain, (the kees hatze) "that this comet should come to *foretel* my mother's death, when she was dead four days before it appeared?" Another day, to the same person, he said, "I fear you do my mother too much honour at the expence of religion. Is it decent to suppose, that such a star, the most remarkable appearance at the birth of Christ, should now be employed on no greater errand than to foretel the death of the daughter of Guebra Mascal?" These, and many other such railleries, accounted by these visionaries as little short of impiety, so mortified Koste (the kees hatze,) a great believer in, and protector of the dreamers, that he resigned all his employments, and retired among the hermits into the desert of Werk-leva, towards Sennaar, to study the aspects of the stars more accurately, and at leisure.

Though we neither pay to this comet the superstitious reverence of these fanatics, nor treat its appearance like Yasous, we acknowledge our gratitude to the historian who recorded the fact. We shall hereby endeavour to establish our chronology in opposition to that of the catholic writers, relating to the date of some transactions with which they were not contemporaries, and relate from hearsay only, as happening before the arrival of the missionaries in this country.

Yasous the Great came to the throne, on the death of his father Hannes in 1680; the 9th year of this reign then was 1689.

Hedar is the 3d month of the Abyssinians, and answers to part of our November; and the 12th of that month, Hedar, is the feast of St Michael the archangel, or 8th day of our month November, N. S.

Gondar is in lat. 12° 34′ 30″ N. and in long. 37° 33′ 0″ E. from the meridian of Greenwich. By the

fiery appearance of the nucleus, or body of the comet, it certainly then was very near the sun, and either was going down upon it to its perihelion, or had already passed it, and was receding to its aphelion; but by its increasing tail, already at a great length, we may conjecture it was only then going down to its conjunction, and was then near approaching to the sun.

From this we should conclude, that this comet must have been seen, however rapidly it did move, some time before the 6th of November, or two days before the feast of St Michael. But this depends on the circumstances of the climate; for, though the tropical rains cease the first of September, the cloudy weather continues all the month of October; at the end of these, fall the latter rains in gentle showers, which allay the fevers in Dembea, and make the whole country wholesome for the march of the army, and these rains fall mostly in the night. From this, it is probable, that the comet, having at first little light and no tail, as yet at a distance from the sun, was not very apparent to the naked eye, till by its increased motion and heat it had acquired both tail and brightness, as it approached its perihelion.

Now we find, by our European accounts*, that, in the year 1689, there did appear a comet, the orbit of which was calculated by M. Pingrè. And this comet arrived at it perihelion on the 1st day of December 1689, so was going down much inflamed, and with a violent motion, to the sun, the 6th of November, when it was observed at Gondar, being but 25 days then from its perihelion.

As these circumstances are more than sufficient to constitute the identity of the comet, a phenomenon

* Astronom. de M. de La Lande, liv. 19. p. 366.

too rare to risk being confounded with another, we may conclude the 9th year of Yasous the First, to be the year 1689 of Christ, such as our chronology, drawn from the Abyssinian annals, states it to be; or, at least, if there is any error, it must be so small as to be of no consequence to any sort of readers, or influence upon the narrative of any transactions.

The 10th year began with a sudden and violent alarm, which spread itself in an instant all over the kingdom, without any certain authority. The Galla, with an innumerable army, were said to have entered Gojam, at several places, and laid waste the whole province; and this was the more extraordinary, as the Nile was now in the height of its inundation. On his march, the king learned that this story arose merely from a panic; and this formidable army turned out to be no more than a small band of robbers of that nation, who had passed the river in their usual way, part on horseback, while the foot were dragged over, hanging at the horses tails, or riding on goats skins blown up with wind. This small party had surprised some weak villages, killed the inhabitants, and immediately returned accross the river. But the alarm continued; and there were people at Gondar who were ready to swear they saw the villages and churches on fire, and a large army of Galla in their march to Ibaba, at the same time that there was not one Galla on the Gojam side of the river.

The king, however, either considering this small body of Galla coming at this unseasonable time, and the panic that was so artificially spread, as a feint to throw him off his guard when a real invasion might be intended, or with a view to cover his own designs, summoned all the men of the province of Gojam to meet him in arms at Ibaba the 7th day of January, being the proper season for preparing an expedition

into the country of the Galla. He himself, in the mean time, retired to Dek, an island in the lake Tzana, there to stay till his army should be collected.

While the king was in the island, a number of the malcontent monks, who had, in the several assemblies, been banished for sedition with Tebedin, came thither, desiring to be heard before an assembly; and they brought with them Arca Denghel, of Debra Samayat, to support their petition. The king answered, that he was ready to call an assembly, provided the Abuna desired, or would promise to be present; but that the Abuna was then at Debra Mariam, where they might know his mind.

The Abuna, who foresaw that no good could be expected from such meetings, and knew how disagreeable they were to the king, absolutely refused to attend. On this they returned again to the king, desiring that, of his own mere prerogative, he would call their assembly without consulting the primate further. To this the king answered boldly, That he knew it was his right to call his subjects together, without any other reason for so doing but his will; yet, when the avowed cause of the meeting was to canvass matters of faith, he had made it a rule to himself, that the Abuna should always be present, or at least consent to the meeting. And, with this answer, he ordered them all to depart immediately.

Many of the principal people about the king advised him to put these turbulent people in irons, for daring to come into his presence without leave. But Yasous was contented to remand each of them to the place of his banishment, whence he came. He then removed from Dek to Ibaba, on the 10th of January, the journey being no more than two easy days; but, whether the Galla did not intend another invasion, or whether they were overawed by the king's preparations and

presence, and did not think themselves safe even in their own country, none of them this year passed the Nile, or gave any uneasiness either to Gojam or Damot.

Though the whole nation believed that the king's attention was entirely engaged in the various expeditions against the Galla and Shangalla, which he executed with so much diligence and success, yet there was still an object superior to all these, a secret in his own breast, after the parties concerned had absolutely forgot it. All his campaigns against the Shangalla were only designed to lull asleep those he considered as his principal enemies, that he might render the blow which he aimed at them more certain and effectual.

Six years had now passed since the Agows, and particularly their most powerful tribe, the Zeegam, had, with those of Damot and the Galla, conspired to put the crown upon the head of Isaac, the rebel prince, who had lost his life in the engagement which followed on the other side of the Nile. The country of the Agows, is, in general, open, full of rich plains, abundantly watered by a variety of fine streams; in other parts, gentle risings and descents, but without mountains, saving that, almost in every tribe, nature had placed one rugged mountain, to which these people retired upon the approach of their neighbouring enemies, the Galla and Shangalla. This description applies in a more extensive manner to the country of the Zeegam, the most powerful, rich, and trading tribe of the whole nation.

Not one single mountain, but a considerable ridge, divides the country nearly in the middle, the bottom of which, and nearly one-third up, is covered with brush-wood, full of stiff bamboos and canes, bearing prickly fruit, with aloes, acacia very thorny, and of several dwarf shrubby kinds, interspersed with the

kantuffa*, a beautiful thorn, which alone is considered, where it grows thick, and in abundance, as a sufficient impediment for the march of a royal army. Through these are paths known only to the inhabitants themselves, which lead you to the middle of the mountain, where are large caves, probably begun by nature, and afterwards enlarged by the industry of man. The mouths of these are covered with bushes, canes, and wild oats, that grow so as to conceal both man and horse, while the tops of these mountains are flat and well-watered, and there they sow their grain out of the reach of the enemy. Upon the first alarm, they drive the cattle to the top, lodge their wives and children in the caves, and, when the enemy approaches near, they hide the cattle in the caves likewise, some of which cavities are so large as to hold 500 oxen, and all the people to which they belong. The men then go down to the lowest part of the mountain, from whose thickets they sally, upon every opportunity that presents itself to attack the enemy whom they find marauding in the plains.

The king had often assembled his army at Ibaba, only four days march from Zeegam. He had passed below the country, and returned by the other side of it, in his attack upon Geesa and Wumbarea; but he had never committed any act of hostility, nor shewn himself discontented with the inhabitants. To deceive them still farther, he now ordered his army to meet him at Este in Begemder; and sent to Kasmati Claudius, governor of Tigré, to join him with all his forces, as soon as he should hear of his arrival at Lama, a large plain before we descend the steep mountain of Lamalmon, not far from the banks of

* See the article *kantuffa* in the Appendix.

the river Tacazze. He privately gave orders also to Kasmati Claudius, Kasmati Dimmo Christos of Tigré, and to Adera and Quaquera Za Menfus Kedus, to inform themselves where the water lay below, and whether there was enough for his army in Betcoom, for so they call the territory of the eastern branch of Shangalla, adjoining to Sire and Tigré. By this manœuvre the enemy was deceived, as the most intelligent thought he would attack Lasta; and others, that knew the secret of the water, were sure his march was against the Shangalla.

The king began his march from Ibaba; crossed the Nile at the second cataract below Dara, where there is a bridge; and, entering Begemder, he joined his army at Este, which was going in a route directly from Agow-midre and Damot towards Lasta. But no sooner was he arrived at Este, than, that very night, he suddenly turned back the way he came, and marching through Maitsha, crossed the Nile, for the second time, at Goutto, above the first cataract.

The morning of the 3d of May, the sixth day of forced marches, without having encamped the whole way, he entered Zeegam at the head of his army. He found the country in perfect security, both people and cattle below on the plains and in the villages; and having put all to the sword who first offered themselves, and the principal of the conspirators being taken prisoners, he sold their wives and children at a public auction for slaves to the highest bidder. He then took the principal men among them along with him, for security for paying six years tribute which they were in arrears, fined them 6000 oxen, which he ordered to be delivered upon the spot; and then collecting his army, he sent to the chiefs of Damot to meet him before he entered their territory, and to bring security with them for the fine he intended to

lay upon them, otherwise he would destroy their country with fire and sword; and he advanced the same day to Assoa, south of the sources of the Nile, divided only from Damot by the ridge of mountains of Amid Amid.

The people of Damot, inhabiting an open level country without defence, had no choice but to throw themselves on the king's mercy, who fined them 500 ounces of gold and 100 oxen, and took the principal people with him in irons as hostages.

He then returned, leaving the sources of the Nile on his right, through Dengui, Fagitta, and Aroosi; crossed the river Kelti, having the Agow and Atcheffer on his left, and returned to Gondar by Dingleber. He then gave 2000 cattle to the churches of Tecla Haimanout and Yasous, being nearest the king's palace, to the Itchegue Hannes, the judges and principal servants of his household, to all a share, without reserving one to himself. And the rains being now very constant (for it was the 25th of June), he resolved to continue the rest of the winter in Gondar, to regulate the affairs of the church.

This year the king resumed his expedition against the Shangalla, towards which he had taken several preparatory steps, while he was projecting the surprise of the Zeegam. These are the Troglodytes on the eastern part of Abyssinia, towards the Red Sea, south of Walkayt, Sire, Tigré, and Baharnagash, till they are there cut off by the mountains of the Habab. These, the most powerful of all their tribes, are comprehended under the general name of Dobenah; the tribe Baasa, which we have already spoken of as occupying the banks of the Tacazze, are the only partners they have in the peninsula formed by that river and the Mareb. Their country and manner of life have been already abundantly described. It is all

called Kolla, in opposition to Daga, which is the general name of the mountainous parts of Abyssinia.

The king, being informed by Kasmati Claudius, that there was water in great plenty at Betcoom, marched from Gondar the 29th of October to Deba, thence to Kossogue, after to Tamama. He then turned to the left, to a village called Sidre, nearer to the Shangalla. From this station he forbade the lighting fires in the camp, and took the road leading to the Mareb; then turning to the left, the 1st of December he surprised a village called Kunya. The king was the first who began the attack, and was in great danger, as Mazmur, captain of his guard, was killed by a lance at his side. But the soldiers rushing in upon sight of the king's situation, who had already slain two with his own hand, the village was carried, and the inhabitants put to the sword, refusing all to fly, and fighting obstinately to the last gasp.

From Kunya the king proceeded rapidly to Tzaada Amba *, the largest and most powerful settlement of these savages. They have no water but what they get from the river Mareb, which, as I have elsewhere observed, rises above Dobarwa, and, after making the circle of that town, loses itself soon after in the sand for a space, then appears again, and, after a short course, hides itself a second time to the N. E. near the Taka, whose wells it supplies with fresh water. But in the rainy months it runs with a full stream, in a wide and deep bed, and unites itself to the Tacazze, making with it the northmost point of the ancient island of Meroe.

The king met the same success at Tzaada Amba that he had before experienced at Kunya, at which

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* The white mountain.

last village he passed the feast of the epiphany, and benediction of the waters; a ceremony annually observed both by the Greek and Abyssinian church, the intent of which has been strangely mistaken by foreigners.

From Kunya, his head-quarters, Yasous attacked the several nations of which it is in a manner the capital, Zacoba, Fade, Qualquou, and Sahale, and returned again to Tzaada Amba, resolving to complete their destruction. The remains of these miserable people, finding resistance vain, had hid themselves in inaccessible caves in the mountains, and thickest parts of the woods, where they lay perfectly concealed in the day-time, and only stole out at night, when thirst obliged them. The king, who knew this, and that they had no other water but what they brought from the Mareb, formed a strong line of troops along the banks of that river, till the greatest part of the Shangalla of Tzaada Amba died of thirst, or were taken or slain by the army.

His next enterprise was to attempt Betcoom, a large habitation of Shangalla east of the Mareb, whose number, strength, and reputation for courage, had hitherto prevented the Abyssinians from molesting or touching them, unless the farthest skirts of their country. The names of their tribes inhabiting Betcoom are, Baigada, Dade, Ketfe, Kicklada, Moleraga, Megaerbe, Gana, Sele, Hamta, Shalada, Elmsi, and Lente. The small river of Lidda, falling from a high precipice, when swelled with the winter rains, hollows out deep and large reservoirs below, which it leaves full of water when the rains cease, so that these people are here as well supplied with water as those who dwell on the Mareb and Tacazze. This was a circumstance unknown, till this sagacious and provident king ordered the place to be reconnoitred by Kas-

mati Claudius, then marched and encamped on the river Lidda, which, after a short but violent course, falls into the Mareb.

The Shangalla of Betcoom did nothing worthy of their reputation or numbers. They had already procured intelligence of the fate of great part of their nation, and had dispersed themselves in unknown and desolate places. The king, however, made a considerable number of slaves of the younger sort, and killed as many of the rest as fell into his hands.

Leaving Betcoom, the army proceeded still eastward; passed through the mountains of the Habab, into the low level country which runs parallel to the Red Sea, at the base of these mountains, where he spent several days hunting the elephant, some of which he slew with his own hand, and turned then to the left to Amba Tchou * and Taka.

The Taka are a nation of shepherds living near the extremity of the rains. They are not Arabs, but live in villages, and were part formerly of the Bagla, or Habab; they speak the language of Tigré, and are now reputed part of the kingdom of Sennaar.

While the king was at Taka, he received the disagreeable news, that, after he had left the Shangalla on the Mareb, Mustapha Gibberti, a Mahometan soldier in the service of Kasmati Fasa Christos of Dedgin, had, with a small number of men, ventured down, thinking that he should surprise the Shangalla of Tzaada Amba, before they recovered from their late misfortune. This Mustapha had slain two or three Shangalla with fire-arms; and at first they stood aloof, as fearing the king. But finding soon that it was no part of his army, and only a small body of

* The mountain of salt. Eth.

adventurers, the Shangalla, now collected in numbers, surrounded Mustapha and his party, whom they cut off to a man; and, pursuing their advantage, they entered and took Dedgin, wounded Kasmati Fasa Christos, and put the inhabitants of the town to the sword.

News of this misfortune were carried speedily to Kasmati Claudius, governor of Tigré: Cassem, a Mahometan, led the Gibbertis, the people of that religion in the province; and, as he was an advanced party, came speedily to blows with the Shangalla, and was closely engaged, with great appearance of success, when Claudius came up with an army that would soon have put an end to the contest. But no sooner was his army engaged with the Shangalla, than a panic seized him, and he sounded a retreat, which in an instant became a most shameful flight. Cassem and his Gibbertis fell, fighting to the last man, in the middle of their enemies. The Shangalla followed their advantage, and great part of the Abyssinian army perished in the flight. Claudius, though he escaped, left his standard, kettle-drums, and his whole province in possession of the enemy.

The king, upon hearing this, returned hastily into Sire. His presence established order and tranquillity in that province, already half abandoned for fear of the Shangalla. From Sire he proceeded to Axum, where he celebrated his victories over the Shangalla, by several days of feasting and thanksgiving.

In the midst of the rejoicing, news were brought that Murat, a servant of the king, whom he had dispatched to India with merchandise, to bring such commissions as he stood in need of, was arrived at Masuah, where Musa, the Naybe, or Turkish governor of the island, had detained him, and seized his goods, under some vexatious pretences. There is

not indeed a more merciless thievish set of miscreants, than in that government of Masuah. But the king knew too well the few resources that island had, to be long in applying a remedy, without moving from Axum. After being fully informed of the affair, in all its circumstances, by Murat, he sent to Abba Saluce, Guebra Christos, and Zarabrook of Hamazen, the governors of the districts, that as it were surround Masuah, prohibiting all, upon pain of death, to suffer any provisions to be carried by any person whatever into the island of Masuah.

A severe famine instantly followed, which was to terminate in certain death, before any relief could come to them, unless from Abyssinia. The Naybe Musa, therefore, found into what a terrible scrape he had got; but hunger did not leave him a moment to deliberate. No third way remained, but either he must see the king, or die; and without hesitation he chose the former. He, therefore, set out for Axum, bringing with him Murat and all the merchandises he had seized, as also several very considerable presents for Yasous himself, who accepted them, received his submission, and ordered the communication with Abyssinia to be open as before. This done, he dismissed the Naybe, who returned to Masuah in peace.

The next affair that came before the king was that of Kasmati Claudius (governor of Tigré), who was accused and convicted of having fled while the battle with the Shangalla was yet undecided, leaving his standard and kettle-drums in the power of the enemy. Besides his present misbehaviour, strong prejudice existed against him, drawn from his former character; for it was averred, from very credible authority, that on one occasion, upon a very slender appearance of sedition, he ordered his troops to fire upon several priests of Axum, some of whom were killed on the

spot. Besides which, in the reign of Hatze Hannes, he was found guilty of capital crimes committed at Emfras, condemned to die, and was already hanging upon the tree, when a very seasonable reprieve arriving from the king, he was thereupon cut down whilst yet alive. Yasous was contented with depriving him of his employment, and afterwards sending him to perpetual banishment.

The next brought to their trial were Za Woldo, and Adera and his sons. These last were very near relations to the king, for they were sons of Ozoro Keduset Christos, daughter of Facilidas. They were accused of having deserted their country, and left it waste, to be over-run by wild beasts, and a rendezvous for the Shangalla, who thence extended their incursions as far as Waldubba. Of this there was ample proof against them, and they were therefore sentenced to die; but the king commuted their punishment into that of being imprisoned for life in a cave in the island of Dek.

As for the province of Sire itself, he declared all the inhabitants and nobility degraded from their rank, and all lands, whether *(gult)* feus from the king, or held by any other tenure, were confiscated, resumed by, and re-united to the crown. He then reduced the whole province from a royal government to a private one, and annexed it to the province of Tigré, whose governor was to place over it a shum, or petty officer, without any ensigns of power. And, last of all, he gave the government of Tigré to the Ras Feres, or master of the horse, in room of Kasmati Claudius, degraded and banished.

The many striking examples which the king had lately given, one close upon the other, of his own personal bravery, his impartial justice, his secrecy in his expeditions, and the certain vengeance that fol-

lowed where it was deserved, his punishment of the Zeegam, his expedition against the Shangalla, his affair with the Naybe Musa, and his behaviour to the cowardly Claudius, and dastardly nobility of Sire, fully convinced his subjects of all degrees, that neither family, nor being related to the crown, nor the strength of their country, nor length of time since they offended, nor indeed any thing but a return to and continuance in their duty, could give them security under such a prince. Thus ended the campaign of the Dobenah, spoke of to this day in Abyssinia, as the greatest warlike atchievement of any of their kings. Twenty six thousand men are said to have perished by thirst, when the king took possession of the water at Tzaada Amba. And yet, notwithstanding the smallpox, which, in some places, exterminated whole tribes, the Dobenah have not lost an inch of territory, but seem rather to be gaining upon Sire.

Yasous arrived at Dancaz on the 8th of March 1692, having dismissed his army as he passed Gondar. From Dancaz he went to Lasta, and after a short stay there, came to Arringo in Begemder. At this place the king received accounts that far exceeded his expectations, and gratified his warmest wishes. He had long endeavoured to gain a party among the Galla to divide them; and, though no marks of success had yet followed, he still had continued to use his endeavours.

On his arrival at Arringo, he was met by a chief of the southern Galla, called Kal-kend, who brought him advice, that, while he was busy with the Shangalla, an irruption had been made into Amhara by the Galla tribes of Liban and Toluma; that they, the king's friends, had come up with them at Halka, fought with them, and beat them, and freed Amhara entirely from all apprehension. The king, exceed-

ingly rejoiced to see his most inveterate enemies become the defenders of his country, ordered the governor of Amhara to pay the Kal-kend 500 webs of cotton-cloth, 500 loads of corn, and escort both the men and the present till they were safely delivered in their own country.

The 30th of June the king arrived at Gondar from Arringo, and immediately summoned an assembly of the clergy to meet and receive a letter from the patriarch of Alexandria, brought by Abba Masmur of Agde, and Abba Dioscuros of Maguena, who were formerly sent to Egypt to ask the patriarch why he displaced Abuna Christodulus, and appointed Abba Sanuda in his room, and desiring that Abba Marcus should be made Abuna, and Sanuda deposed. The clergy met very punctually, and the patriarch's letter was produced in the assembly, the seal examined, and declared to be the patriarch's, and unbroken. The letter being opened by the king's order, it contained the patriarch's mandate to depose Abba Sanuda, and to make Marcus Abuna in his place, which was immediately done by command of the king.

While Yasous was thus busied in directing the affairs of his kingdom with great wisdom and success, both in church and state, a matter was in agitation, unknown to him, at a distance from his dominions, which had a tendency to throw them again into confusion.

Towards the end of the last century, there was settled at Cairo a number of Italian missionaries of the reformed order of St Francis, who, though they lived in the same convent, and were maintained at the expence of the fathers of the Holy Land, still pretended to be independent of the guardian of Jerusalem, the superior of these latter.

The expence of their maintenance, joined with

their pretensions to independence, gave great offence to those religious of the Holy Land, who thereupon carried their complaints to Rome, offering to be at the whole charge of the mission of Egypt, and to furnish from their own society subjects capable of attending to, and extending the Christian faith. This offer met with the desired success at Rome. The mission of Egypt, to the exclusion of every other order, was given to the fathers of Jerusalem, or the Holy Land, whom we shall henceforth call Capuchin friars. These Capuchins lost no time, but immediately dismissed the reformed Franciscans, whom we shall hereafter distinguish by the name of Franciscans, suffering only two of that order to remain at Cairo.

The Franciscans, thus banished, returned all to Rome, and there, for several years together, openly defended their own cause, insisting upon the justice of their being replaced in the exercise of their ancient functions. This, however, they found absolutely impossible. They were a poor order, and the interest of the Capuchins had stopped every avenue of the sacred college against them. Finding, therefore, that fair and direct means could not accomplish their ends, they had recourse to others not so commendable, and by these they succeeded, and obtained their purpose. They pretended that, when the Jesuits were chased out of Abyssinia, a great number of Catholics, avoiding the persecution, had fled into the neighbouring countries of Sennaar and Nubia; that they still remained, most meritoriously preserving their faith amidst the very great hardships inflicted upon them by the infidels; but that, under these hardships, they must soon turn Mahometans, unless spiritual assistance was speedily sent them.

This representation, as totally void of truth as ever fable was, was confirmed by the two Franciscans, who

still remained at Cairo by permission of the Capuchins, or fathers of the Holy Land; and, when afterwards published at Rome, it excited the zeal of every bigot in Italy. All interested themselves in behalf of these imaginary Christians of Nubia; and Pope Innocent XII. was so convinced of the truth of the story, as to establish a considerable fund to support the expence of this, now called the Ethiopic mission, the sole conduct of which remains still with the reformed Franciscans.

To take care of these fugitive Christians of Nubia, was the principal, but not the only charge committed to the fathers of his mission. They were to penetrate into Abyssinia, and keep the seeds of the Romish faith alive there, until a proper time should present itself for converting the whole kingdom.

In order to accomplish this, a large convent was bought for them at Achmim, the ancient Panopolis, in Upper Egypt, where they might be able to afford a refreshment to such of their brethren as should return weary and exhausted by preaching among the Nubian confessors; and, for further assistance, they had permission to settle two of their order at Cairo, independent of the fathers of the Holy Land, notwithstanding the former exclusion.

Such is the state of this mission at the present time. No Nubian Christians existed at the time of its establishment, nor is there one in being at this day. But if their proselytes have not increased, their convents have. Achmim, Furshout, Badjoura, and Negade, are all religious houses belonging to this mission, although I never yet was able to learn, that either heretic, Pagan, or Mahometan, was so converted as to die in the Christian faith at any one of these places; nor have they been much troubled with relieving their brethren, worn out with the toils of

Abyssinian journies. None of them, as far as I know, have ever made one step towards that country; nor is this indeed to be regretted by the republic of letters; for, besides a poor stock of scholastic divinity, not one of them that I saw had either learning or abilities to be of the smallest use either in religion or discovery.

It was now the most brilliant period of the reign of Louis XIV., almost an Augustan age, and generally allowed as so, both in France and among foreigners. Men of merit, of all countries and professions, felt the effects of the liberality of this great encourager of learning; public works were undertaken, and executed superior to the boasted ones of Greece or Rome, and a great number and variety of noble events constituted a magnificent history of his reign, in a series of medals. Religion alone had yet afforded no hint for these. His conduct in this particular, instead of a hero, shewed him to be a blind, bloody, merciless tyrant, madly throwing down in a moment, with one hand, what he had, with the assistance of great ministers, been an age in building with the other. The Jesuits, zealous for the honour of the king, their great protector, thought it now the time to step in and wipe away the stain. With this view, they set upon forwarding a scheme, which might have furnished a medal superior to all the rest, had its inscription been, "The kings of Arabia and Saba shall bring gifts."

Father Fleuriau, a friend of father de la Chaise, the king's confessor, was employed to direct the consul at Cairo, that he should, in co-operation with the Jesuits privately, send a fit person into Abyssinia, who might inspire the king of that country with a desire of sending an embassy into France, and, upon the management of this political affair, they founded their hopes of getting themselves replaced in the mission

they formerly enjoyed, and of again superseding their rivals the Franciscans, in directing all the measures to be taken for that country's conversion. But this required the utmost delicacy; for it was well known, that the court of Rome was very ill-disposed towards them, imputing to their haughtiness, implacability, and imprudence, the loss of Abyssinia. Their conduct in China, where they tolerated idolatrous rites to be blended with Christian worship, began also now to be known, and to give the greatest scandal to the whole church. It was, therefore, necessary first to make the king declare in their favour, before they began to attempt to conciliate the pope.

Louis took upon him the protection of this mission, with all the readiness the Jesuits desired; and the Jesuit Verseau was sent immediately to Rome, with strong letters to Cardinal Jansen, protector of France, who introduced him to the pope.

Verseau knew well the consequence of the protection with which he was honoured. At his first audience he declared, in a firm voice and manner, to the pope, that the king had resolved to take upon himself the conduct of the Ethiopic mission, and that he had cast his eyes upon them (the Jesuits) as the fittest persons to be entrusted with the care of it, for reasons best known to himself. The pope dissembled; he extolled, in the most magnificent terms, the king's great zeal for the advancement of religion, approved of the choice he had made of the Jesuits, and praised their resolution as highly acceptable to him, immediately consenting that Verseau, and five other Jesuits, should, without delay, pass into Abyssinia.

But it very soon appeared, notwithstanding the language of the pope, that nothing could be more remote from his intentions; for, without the knowledge of the Jesuits, or any way consulting them, he appointed

the superior of the Franciscans to be his legate *a latere* to the king of Abyssinia, and provided him with presents to that prince, and the chief noblemen of his court.

Some time afterwards, when, to prevent strife or concurrence, the Jesuits applied to the pope, to receive his directions which of the two should first attempt to enter Abyssinia, the Franciscans, or their own order, the pope answered shortly, That it should be those who were most expert. Whether this apparent indisposition of his Holiness intimidated Verseau is not known; but, instead of going to Cairo, he went to Constantinople, thence to Syria, to a convent of his order, of which he was superior; and there he staid. So that the Ethiopic mission at Cairo remained in the hands of two persons of different orders; the one Paschal, an Italian Franciscan friar; the other a Jesuit and Frenchman, whose name was Brevedent.

Brevedent was a person of the most distinguished piety and probity, zealous in promoting his religion, but neither imprudent nor rash in his demonstrations of it; affable in his carriage, cheerful in his disposition, of the most profound humility and exemplary patience. Besides this, he was reputed a man of good taste and knowledge in profane learning, and, what crowned all, an excellent mathematician. He seems, indeed, to me, to have been a copy of the famous Peter Paez, who first gave an appearance of stability to the Portuguese conversion of Abyssinia; like him he was a Jesuit, but of a better nation, and born in a better age.

I must here, likewise, take notice of what I have already hinted, that in Abyssinia the character of ambassador is unknown. They have no treaties of peace or commerce with any nation in the world: But, for purposes already mentioned, factors are employed.

Abyssinia being everywhere surrounded by Mahometans, these of course have the preference; and, as they carry letters from their masters, the custom of the East obliges them to accompany these with presents to the sovereigns of the respective kingdoms through which they pass: a circumstance which dignifies them with the title of ambassador in the several courts at which they have business. Such was Mus[illegible], a factor of the king, whom we have seen detained, and afterwards delivered by the Naybe of Masuah, not many years before, in this king's reign; and such also was Hagi Ali, then upon his master's business at Cairo, when M. de Maillet was French consul, and had received instructions from father Fleuriau at Paris, to bring about this embassy from Abyssinia.

Besides his other business, Hagi Ali had orders to bring with him, if possible, a physician from Cairo; for Yasous, and his eldest son, were both of a scorbutic habit, which threatened to turn into a leprosy. Hagi Ali, in former voyages, had been acquainted with a capuchin friar, Paschal; and, having received medicines from him before, he now applied to Paschal to return with him into Abyssinia, and undertake the cure of the king. Paschal very readily complied with this, upon condition that he should be allowed to take for his companion a monk of his own order, friar Anthony. Hagi Ali readily consented, happy in being enabled to carry two physicians to his master instead of one.

The French consul was soon informed of this treaty with the friar Paschal; and, having very easy means to bring Hagi Ali to his house, he informed him, that neither Paschal nor Anthony were physicians, but that he himself had a man of his own nation, whose merit he extolled beyond any thing that had hitherto been said of Hippocrates or Galen. Hagi Ali very will-

ingly accepted of the condition, and it was agreed that, as Verseau had not appeared, Brevedent, above mentioned, should attend the physician as his servant.

This physician was Charles Poncet, a Frenchman, settled in Cairo, who (as M. Maillet says) was bred a chemist and apothecary; and, if so, was necessarily better skilled in the effects and nature of medicine, than those are who call themselves physicians, and practise in the east. Nothing against his private character was intimated by the consul at this time; and with all deference to better judgment, I must still think, that if Poncet deserved the epithets of drunkard, liar, babbler, and thief, which Maillet abundantly bestows upon him towards the end of this adventure, the consul could not have chosen a more improper representative of his master, nor a more probable person to make the design he had in hand miscarry. Nor could he, in this case, ever vindicate the preventing Paschal's journey, who must have been much fitter for all the employments intended than such a man as Poncet, if one half is true of that which the consul said of him afterwards.

Maillet, having so far succeeded, prevailed upon one Ibrahim Hanna, a Syrian, to write five letters, according to his own ideas, in the Arabic language; one of which was to the king, the four others to the principal officers at the court of Abyssinia. Doubting, however, whether Ibrahim's expressions were equal to the sublimity of his sentiments, he directed him to submit the letters to the consideration of one Francis, a monk, capuchin, or friar of the Holy Land. Ibrahim knew not this capuchin; but he was intimate with another Francis of the reformed Franciscan order; and to him, by mistake, he carried the letters.

These Franciscans were the very men from whom M. de Maillet would have wished to conceal the send-

ing Poncet with the Jesuit Brevedent; but the secret being now revealed, Ibrahim Hana was discharged the French service for this mistake. As Hagi Ali departed immediately after with Poncet and Brevedent, no time remained for the Franciscans to take the steps they afterwards did to bring about the tragedy in the person of Poncet, which they completely effected in that of M. Noir du Roule.

Mr Poncet, furnished with a chest of medicines at the expence of the factory, accompanied by father Brevedent, who, in quality of his servant, now took the name of Joseph, joined Hagi Ali, and the caravan destined, in the first place, to Sennaar, the capital of Nubia.

Poncet set out from Cairo on the 10th of June of the year 1698, and, fifteen days after, they came to Monfalout, a considerable town upon the banks of the Nile, the rendezvous of the caravan being at Ibnah, half a league above Monfalout. Here they tarried for above three months, waiting the coming of the merchants from the neighbouring towns.

In the afternoon of the 24th of September, they advanced above a league and a half distance, and took up their lodging at Elcantara, or the bridge on the eastern bank of the Nile. A large calish, or cut from the Nile, stretches here to the east, and, at that season, was full of water, the inundation being at its height.

Poncet believes he was on the eastern banks of the Nile; but this is a mistake. Siout and Montfalout, the cities he spake of, are both on the western banks of that river; nor had the caravan any thing to do with the eastern banks, when their course was for many days to the west, and to the southward of west. Nor was the bridge he passed a bridge over the Nile. There are no bridges upon that river, from the Medi-

terranean till we arrive at the second cataract, near the lake Tzana in Abyssinia. The amphitheatre and ruins he speaks of are the remains of the ancient city Isiu; and what he took for the Nile was a calish from the river to supply that city with water.

The 2d of October the caravan set out in earnest, and passed, as he says, into a frightful desert of sand, having first gone through a narrow passage, which he does not mention, amidst those barren, bare, and stoney mountains, which border the valley of Egypt on the west.

The 6th of October they came to El-Vah, a large village, or town, thick planted with palm-trees, the Oasis Parva of the ancients, the last inhabited place to the west that is under the jurisdiction of Egypt. By softening the original name, Poncet calls this Helaoue, which, as he says, signifies *sweetness*. But surely this was never given it from the productions he mentions to abound there, viz. senna and coloquintida. The Arabs call El-Vah a shrub, or tree, not unlike our hawthorn either in form or flower. It was of this wood, they say, Moses's rod was made when he sweetened the waters of Marah. With a rod of this wood, too, Kaleb Ibn el Waalid, the great destroyer of Christians, sweetened these waters at El-Vah, once very bitter, and gave it the name from this miracle. A number of very fine springs burst from the earth at El-Vah, which render this small spot verdant and beautiful, though surrounded with dreary deserts on every quarter: it is situated like an island in the midst of the ocean.

The caravan rested four days at El-Vah, to procure water and provisions for the continuation of the journey through the desert. Poncet's description of the unpleasantness of this, is perfectly exact, and without exaggeration. In two days they came to Cheb, where

there is water, but strongly impregnated with alum, as the name itself signifies; and, three days after, they reached Selima, where they found the water good, rising from an excellent spring, which gives its name to a large desert, extending westward forty-five days journey to Dar Fowr, Dar Selè, and Bagirma, three small principalities of negroes, that live within the reach of the tropical rains.

At Selima they provided water for five days; and, on the 26th of October, having turned their course a little to the eastward, came to Moscho, or Machou, a large village on the western banks of the Nile; which Poncet still mistakes for the eastern, and which is the only inhabited place since the leaving El-Vah, and the frontiers of the kingdom of Dongola, dependent upon that of Sennaar. The Nile here takes the farthest turn to the westward, and is rightly delineated in the French maps.

Poncet very rightly says, this is the beginning of the country of the Barabra, or Beberians (I suppose it is a mistake of the printer when called in the narrative Barauras). The true signification of the term is, *the land of the Shepherds;* a name more common, and better known, in the first dynasties of Egypt, than in more modern histories. The Erbab (or governor) of this province received him hospitably, kindly invited him to Argos, his place of residence, on the eastern or opposite side of the Nile, and entertained him there, upon hearing from Poncet that he was sent for by the king of Abyssinia.

After refreshing themselves eight days at Moscho, they left it on the 4th of November 1698, and arrived at Dongola on the 13th of the same month. The country which he passed along the Nile is very pleasant, and is described by him very properly. It does not owe its fertility to the overflowing of the Nile, the

banks of that river being considerably too high. It is watered, however, by the industry of the inhabitants, who, by different machines, raise water from the stream.

We are not to attribute to Poncet, but to those who published it, the story here put into father Brevedent's mouth about the fugitive Christians in Nubia; which fable gave rise to the first institution of the Ethiopic mission. "It drew tears, says he, from the eyes of father Brevedent, my dear companion, when he reflected, that it was not long since this was a Christian country; and that it had not lost the faith, but only for want of some person who had zeal enough to consecrate himself to the instruction of this abandoned nation." He adds, that upon their way they found a great number of hermitages and churches half ruined; a fiction derived from the same source.

Dongola was taken, and apostatized early; and the stones of hermitages and churches had long before this been carried off, and applied to the building of mosques. Father Brevedent, therefore, if he wept for any society of Christians at Dongola, must have wept for those that had perished there 500 years before.

Poncet was much caressed at Dongola for the cures he made there. The Mek, or king, of that city wished him much to stay and settle there; but desisted out of respect, when he heard he was going to the emperor of Ethiopia. Dongola, Poncet has placed rightly on the eastern bank of the Nile, about lat. 26° 22′.

The caravan departed from Dongola on the 6th of January 1699; four days after which they entered into the kingdom of Sennaar, where they met Erbab Ibrahim, brother of the prime minister, and were received civilly by him. He defrayed their expences

also as far as Korti, where they arrived the 13th of January.

Our travellers from Korti were obliged to enter the great desert of Bahiouda, and cross it in a south-east direction, till they came to Derreira, where they rested two days, which, Poncet says, was done to avoid the Arabs upon the Nile. These Arabs are called Chaigie; they inhabit the banks of that river to the north east of Korti, and never pay the king his revenue without being rudely compelled to it.

The country about Derreira is called Belled Ullah, from the cause of its plenty, rather than the plenty itself. This small district is upon the very edge of the tropical rains, which it enjoys in part; and, by that, is more fruitful than those countries which are watered only by the industry of man. The Arabs of these deserts figuratively call rain Rahamet Ullah, 'the mercy of God,' and Belled Ullah, 'the country which enjoys that mercy.'

Some days after, the caravan came to Gerri. Poncet says, the use of this station was to examine caravans coming from the northward, whether they had the small-pox or not. This usage is now discontinued by the decay of trade. It must always have served little purpose, as the infection oftener comes in merchandise than by passengers. At Gerri great respect was shewn to Poncet, as going to Ethiopia.

I cannot conceive why Poncet says, that to avoid the great windings of the Nile, he should have been obliged to travel to the north-east. This would have plainly carried him back to the desert of Bahiouda, and the Arabs: his course must have been south-west, to avoid the windings of the Nile; because he came to Herbagi, which he describes very properly as a delicious situation. They next day they came to Sennaar.

The reader, I hope, will easily perceive that my intention is not to criticise Mr Poncet's journey. That has been done already so illiberally and unjustly, that it has nearly brought it into disrepute and oblivion. My intention is to illustrate it; to examine the facts, the places, and distances it contains; to correct the mistakes where it has any, and restore it to the place it ought to hold in geography and discovery. It was the first intelligible itinerary made through these deserts: and I conceive it will be long before we have another. At any rate, to restore and establish the old one will, in all sensible minds, be the next thing to having made a second experiment.

He surely is in some degree of mistake about the situation of Sennaar, when he says it is upon an eminence. It is on a plain, close on the western banks of the Nile. A small error, too, has been, made about its latitude. By an observation, said to have been made by father Brevedent, the 21st of March 1699, he found the latitude of Sennaar to be 13° 4′ north. The French maps, the most correct we have in all that regards the east, place this capital of Nubia, in lat. 15° and a few minutes. But the public may rest assured, that the correct latitude of Sennaar, by a mean of very small differences, of near fifty observations, made with a three feet brass quadrant, in the course of several months I staid in that town, is lat. 13° 34′ 36″ north.

What I have to say farther concerning Sennaar will come more naturally in my own travels; and I shall only so far consider the rest of Poncet's route, as to explain and clear it from mistakes; Sennaar being the only point in which our two tracks unite.

I must beg the reader to remark, that, from the time of Poncet's setting out of Egypt till his arrival at Sennaar, so far was he from being ill-looked upon,

or any bad construction put upon his errand, that he was, on the contrary, respected everywhere, as going to the king of Abyssinia. It never was then imagined he was to dry up the Nile, nor that he was a conjuror to change its course; nor that he was to teach the Abyssinians to cast cannon, and make war; nor that he was loaded with immense sums of money. These were all *piæ fraudes*, lies invented by the priests and friars, to incite these ignorant barbarians to a crime, which, though it passed unrevenged, will justly make these brethren in iniquity the detestation of men of every religion, in all ages.

Poncet left Sennaar the 12th of May 1699, and crossed the Nile at Basboch, about four miles above the town, where he stopped for three days. This he calls a fair village; but it is a very miserable one, consisting of scarce 100 huts, built of mud and reeds.

He departed the 15th in the evening, and travelled all the night as far as Bacras, and arrived the day after at Abec; then at Baha, a long day's journey of about ten hours. He is mistaken, however, when he says Baha is situated upon the banks of the Nile, for it is upon a small river that runs into it. But, at the season he passed it, most of those rivers were dried up.

On the 19th he came to Dodar, a place as inconsiderable as Baha; then to Abra, a large village; then to Debarke and Enbulbul. On the 25th they came to Giesim. Giesim is a large village, situated upon the banks of the Nile, in the middle of a forest of trees, of a prodigious height and size, all of which are loaded with fruit or flowers, and crowded with paroquets, and variety of other birds, of a thousand different colours. They made a long stay at this place, not less than nineteen days.

In this interval, father Brevedent is said to have

made an observation of the latitude of the place, which, if admitted, would throw all the geography of this journey into confusion. Poncet says, that Giesim is half way between Sennaar and the frontiers of Ethiopia, and that a small brook, a little beyond Serke, is the boundary between those states. Now, from Sennaar to Giesim are nine stages, and one of them we may call a double one; but between Giesim and Serke, only four: Giesim, then, cannot be half-way between Sennaar and Serke. Again, the latitude of Sennaar is 13° 4′ north, according to Brevedent, or rather 13° 34′. Now, if the latitude of Giesim be 10°, then the distance between Sennaar and it must be about 250 miles, which they had travelled in eight days, or more than thirty miles a-day, which, in that country, is absolutely impossible.

But what must make this evident is, that we know certainly that Gondar, the metropolis to which they were then going, is in lat. 12° 34′ north. Giesim, then, would be south of Gondar, and the caravan must have passed it when the observation was made. But they were not yet arrived at the confines of Sennaar, much less to the capital of Abyssinia, to which they were indeed advancing, but were still far to the northward of it. There is a mistake, then, in this observation, which is very pardonable, Brevedent being then ill of a mortal dysentery, which terminated in death soon after. We shall, therefore, correct this error, making the latitude of Giesim 14° 12′ north, about 110 English miles from Sennaar, and 203 from Gondar.

The 11th of June they set out from Giesim for Deleb; then to Chow; and next to Abotkna. They rested all night, the 14th, in the delightful valley of Sonnone; and, two days after, they came to Serke, a large town of trade, where there are many cotton

weavers. Here ends the kingdom of Sennaar, the brook without this town being the boundary of the two states.

Arrived now in Abyssinia, they halted at Tambisso, a village which belongs to the Abuna; next at Abiad, a village upon the mountain. On the 23d they stopped in a valley full of canes and ebony trees, where a lion carried away one of their camels. On the 24th they passed the Gandova, a large, violent, and dangerous river. The country being prodigiously woody, one of their beasts of carriage, straggling from the caravan, was bit on the hip by a bear, as Mr Poncet apprehends. But they were now in the country corresponding to that inhabited by the Shangalla, one of the hottest in the world, where the thermometer rises to 100° in the shade. Bears are not found in climates like this; and most assuredly there are none even in the higher and colder mountains above. Poncet does not say he saw the bear, but judged only by the bite; which might have been that of a lion, leopard, or many other animals, but more probably that of the hyæna.

The 27th they arrived at Girana, a village on the top of a mountain. Here they left their camels, and began to ascend from the Kolla into the more temperate climate in the mountains of Abyssinia. From Girana they came to Barangoa, and the next day to Tchelga, where anciently was the customhouse of Sennaar, while peace and commerce subsisted between the two kingdoms. The 3d of July they arrived at Barcos, or Bartcho, about half a day's journey from Gondar; and on the 9th of August father Brevedent died. Poncet himself was detained by indisposition at this village of Barcos, till the 21st of July, on which day he set out for Gondar, and arrived in the evening; where he succeeded to his wishes, performing

a complete cure upon his royal patient in a very short time; and so fulfilled this part of his mission as perfectly as the ablest physician could have done.

As for the other part with which he was charged, I doubt very much if it was in his power to perform it in another manner than he did. It required a mind full of ignorance and presumption, such as was that of M. de Maillet, and all the missionaries at the head of whom he was, to believe that it was possible for a private man, such as Poncet, without language, without funds, without presents, or without power or possibility of giving them any sort of protection in the way, to prevail upon twenty-six or twenty-eight persons, on the word of an adventurer only, to attempt the traversing countries where they ran a very great risk of falling into slavery—to do what? Why, to go to France, a nation of Franks, whose very name they abhorred, that they might be instructed in a religion they equally abhorred, to meet with certain death if ever they returned to their own country; and, unless they did return, they were of no sort of utility whatever.

M. de Maillet should have informed himself well in the beginning, if it was possible that the nobility in Abyssinia could be so ignorant and mean, as to suffer twelve of their children to go to countries unknown, upon the word of a stranger, at least of such a doubtful character as Poncet. I say doubtful, because, if he was such a man as M. de Maillet represents him, a drunkard, a liar, a thief, without religion, a perpetual talker, and a superficial practitioner of what he called his own trade, surely the Abyssinians must have been very fond of emigration, to have left their homes under the care of such a patron. When did M. de Maillet ever hear of an Abyssinian who was willing to leave his own country and travel to Cairo,

except the very few priests who go for duty's sake, for penances or vows, to Jerusalem? When did he ever hear of an Abyssinian layman, noble, or plebeian, attending even the Abuna, though the first dignitary of the church? We shall see presently a poor slave, a Christian Abyssinian boy, immediately under the protection of M. de Maillet, and going directly from him into the presence of his king, taken forcibly from the chancellor of the nation *, and made a Mahometan before their eyes.

The Abyssinian embassy, then, demanded from France, and recommended to M. de Maillet, was a presumptuous, vain, unpracticable chimera, which must have ended in disappointment, and which never could have closed more innocently than it did.

I shall pass over all that had happened during Poncet's stay at Gondar, as he did not understand the language, and must therefore have been very liable to mistake. But as for what he says of armies of 300,000 men; of the king's dress at his audience; of his mourning in purple; of the quantity of jewels he had, and wore; of his having but one wife; and of large stone crosses being erected on the corners of the palace at Gondar; these, and several other things, seem to me to have been superadded afterwards. Nor do I think what is said of the churches and Christians remaining in the kingdom of Dongola, nor the monstrous lie about the golden rod suspended in the air in the convent of Bisan †, is at all the narrative of Poncet, but of some fanatic, lying friar, into whose

* By Chancellor of the Nation is meant the officer immediately next the Consul, who keeps the records, and has a department absolutely independent of the Consul.

† Vid. Poncet.

possession Poncet's manuscript might have fallen. The journey itself, such as I have restored it, is certainly genuine; and, as I believe it describes the best and safest way into Abyssinia, I have rectified some of the few errors it had, and now recommend it to all future travellers, and to the public.

This is to be understood of his travels to Abyssinia; his journey in returning being much more inaccurate and incomplete, the reason of which we have in his own words: "I have not," says he, "exactly noted down the places through which we passed, the great weakness I then lay under not permitting me to write as I could have wished." I shall, therefore, say little upon his return, as the deficiency will be carefully supplied by the history of my own journey from Masuah, the road by which he left the country being very nearly the same as that by which I entered.

It was on the 2d of May, of the year 1700, that Poncet left Gondar, and took his journey to the town of Emfras. Here there is a mistake in the very beginning. Emfras *, at which place I staid for several weeks, is in lat. 12° 12′ 38″, and long. 37° 38′ 30″, consequently about 22 miles from Gondar, almost under the same meridian, or south from it; so that, as he was going to the east, and northward of east, this must have been so many miles out of his way; for, going towards Masuah, his first station must have been upon the river Angrab.

The same may be said of his next to Coga. It was a royal residence indeed, but very much out of his way. He had forgot likewise, when he says, that in the way from Gondar to Emfras, you must go over a

* It is plain, Poncet had no instruments for observation with him, nor was he probably acquainted with the use of them.

very high mountain. The way from Gondar to Emfras, is the beaten way to Begemder, Foggora, and Dara, and so on to the second cataract of the Nile. It is on that plain the armies were encamped before the battle of Serbraxos*, whence the road passes by Correva, which is indeed upon a rising ground, sloping gently to the lake Tzana, but is not either mountain or hill.

Seven or eight days are a space of time just sufficient for passing through Woggora, where he justly remarks the heats are not so excessive as in the places he came from. He takes no notice of the passage of Lamalmon, which ought to have been very sensible to a man in a decayed state of health, but less so as he was only descending it. Every thing which relates to the passage of the Tacazzé, is just and proper, only he calls the river itself the Tekesel, instead of the true name, the *Tacazzé*. It was the Siris of the ancients; and it is doing justice to both countries, when he compares the province of Sire with the most delicious parts of his own country of France. This province is that also where he might, very probably, receive the young elephant, which, he says, awaited him there as a present to the king of France, but died a few days after.

He passed afterwards to Adowa. It is the capital of Tigré, is still the seat of its Governor, and was that of Ras Michael, in my time. All that he says of the intermediate country and its productions, shews plainly, that this work is genuine, and his remarks to be those of an eye-witness.

From this province of Tigré, he enters the country of the Baharnagash, and arrives at Dobarwa, which

* To be described hereafter.

he erroneously calls Duvarna, and says it is the capital of the province of Tigré, whereas it is that of the Baharnagash. Isaac, the Baharnagash, when in rebellion against his sovereign, surrendered this town to the Turks in the year 1558, as before related.

As the authenticity of this journey, and the reality of Poncet's having been in Abyssinia, have been questioned by some vain, ignorant, fanatic people, from malice only, not from a spirit of investigation, of which they were incapable, I have examined every part of it, and compared it with what I myself saw, and shall now give one other instance to prove it genuine, from an observation Poncet has made, and which has escaped all the missionaries, though it was entire and visible in my time.

Among the ruins of Axum * there is a very high obelisk, flat on both sides, and fronting the south. It has upon it no hieroglyphics, but several decorations, or ornaments, the fancy of the architect. Upon a large block of granite, into which the bottom of it is fixed, and which stands before it like a table, is the figure of a Greek patera, and on one side of the obelisk, fronting the south, is the representation of a wooden door, lock, and a latch to it, which first seems designed to draw back and then lift up, exactly in the manner those kind of locks are fashioned in Egypt at this very day. Poncet observed very justly, there are no such locks made use of in Abyssinia, and wonders how they should have represented a thing they had never seen, and, having done so, remained still incapable to make or use it. Poncet was no man of reading out of his own profession; he nowhere pretends it; he recorded this fact because he saw it, as a travel-

* See an elevation of this in my account of Axum.

ler should do, and left others to give the reason which he could not. Poncet calls this place Heleni, from a small village of that name in the neighbourhood. Had he been a scholar, he would have known, that the ruins he was observing were those of the city of Axum, the ancient metropolis of this part of Ethiopia.

Ptolemy Evergetes, the third Grecian king of Egypt, conquered this city and the neighbouring kingdom; resided some time there; and, being absolutely ignorant of hieroglyphics, then long disused, he left the obelisk he had erected for ascertaining his latitudes, ornamented with figures of his own choosing, and the inventions of his subjects, the Egyptians, and particularly the door for the convenience of private life, to be imitated by his new-acquired subjects, the Ethiopians, to whom it had hitherto been unknown.

From Dobarwa he arrived at Arcouva, which, he says, geographers miscal Arequies. M. Poncet might have spared this criticism upon geographers till he himself had been better informed; for the true and only name of the place, known either to Mahometans or Christians, is Arkeeko, as the island to which he passed, crossing an arm of the sea, is called Masuah, not Messoua, as he everywhere spells it.

From Masuah, Poncet crossed the Red Sea to Jidda, passing the island Dahalac and Kotumbal, a high rock, the name of which is not known to many navigators.

Had old Murat, Musa, and Hagi Ali, happened at that time to have been upon some mercantile errand to Cairo, there is no doubt but they would have been preferred, and become ambassadors of France. They would have gone there, perplexed the minister and the consul, with a thousand lies and contrivances, which the French never would have been able to un-

ravel; they would have promised every thing; obtained from the king some considerable sum of money, on which they would have undertaken to send the embassy in any form that was prescribed, and, after their return home, never been heard of more. But those worthies were, probably, all employed at this time; therefore, the only thing Poncet could do, was to bring Murat, since he was to procure, at all events, an ambassador.

He had been a cook to a French merchant at Aleppo; was a maker of brandy at Masuah; and probably his uncle old Murat's servant at the time. But he was not the worse ambassador for this. Old Murat, Hagi Ali, and Musa, had perhaps been also cooks and servants in their time. Prudence, sobriety, and good conduct, skill in languages, and acquaintance with countries, recommended them afterwards to higher trusts. Old Murat probably meant that this nephew should begin his apprenticeship with that embassy to France; and M. Poncet, to increase his consequence, and fulfil the commission the consul gave him, allowed him to invent all the rest.

Poncet, from Jidda, went to Tor, and thence to Mount Sinai, where, after some stay, being overtaken by Murat, they both made their entry into Cairo.

M. de Maillet, the consul, was an old Norman gentleman, exceedingly fond of nobility, consequently very haughty and overbearing to those he reckoned his inferiors, among which he accounted those of his own nation, established at Cairo, though a very amiable and valuable set of men. He was exceedingly testy, choleric, obstinate, and covetous, though sagacious enough in every thing concerning his own interest. He lived for the most part in his closet, seldom went out of the house, and, as far as I could learn, never out of the city. There, however, he wrote a descrip-

tion of all Egypt, which since has had a considerable degree of reputation *.

Maillet had received advice of the miserable state of this embassy from Jidda, that the Sheriffe of Mecca had taken from Poncet, by force, two female Abyssinian slaves, and that the elephant was dead; which particulars being written to France, he was advised, in a letter from father Fleuriau, by no means to promote any embassy to the court of Versailles; that the proper place for it was Rome; but that in France, they looked upon it in the same light as they did upon an embassy from Algiers or Tunis, which did no honour to those who sent it, and as little to those that received it. This, however, was a new light.

M. de Maillet, by this letter, becoming master of the ambassador's destiny, began first to quarrel with him upon etiquette, or who should pay the first visit; and, after a variety of ill-usage, insisted upon seeing his dispatches. This Murat refused to permit; upon which the consul sent privately to the basha, desiring him to take the dispatches or letters from Murat, and sending him at the same time a considerable present.

The basha on this did not fail to extort a letter from Murat by threats of death. He then opened it. It was in Arabic, in very general and indifferent terms, probably the performance of some Moor at Masuah, written at Murat's instance. And well was it for all concerned that it was so; for had the letter been a genuine Abyssinian letter, like those of the empress Helena and king David III., proposing the destruction of Mecca, Medina, and the Turkish ships on the Red

* And there he wrote his Telliamede, which supposes men were first created fishes, for which he was excommunicated. It was an opinion perfectly worthy of alarming the Sorbonne.

Sea, the whole French nation at Cairo would have been massacred, and the consul and ambassador probably impaled.

The Jesuits, ignorant of this manuœuvre of M. de Maillet, but alarmed and scandalized at this breach of the law of nations, for such the basha's having opened a letter, addressed to the king of France, was justly considered, complained to M. Feriol, the French ambassador at Constantinople, who thereupon sent a capigi from the port, to inquire at the basha what he meant by thus violating the law of nations, and affronting a friendly power of such consequence as France.

These capigis are very unwelcome guests to people in office. They are always paid by him they are sent to. Besides this, the report they carry back very often costs that person his life. The basha, accused by the capigi at the instance of the French ambassador at Constantinople, answered like an innocent man, that he had done it by desire of the French consul, from a wish to serve him and the nation, otherwise he should never have meddled in the matter. The consequence was, M. de Maillet was obliged to pay the basha the expence of the capigi; and, having some time afterwards brought it in account with the merchants, the French nation at Cairo, by deliberation of the 6th of July of the year 1702, refused to pay 1515 livres, the demand of the basha, and 518 livres for those of his officers.

The consul, however, had gained a complete victory over Murat, and thereupon determined to send Monhenaut, chancellor of France at Cairo, with letters, which, though written and invented by himself, he pretended to be translations from the Ethiopian original.

But father Verseau, the Jesuit, now returned to Cairo, who had entertained a great distrust of the consul since the discovery of his intrigue with the basha abou: Murat's letter, resolved to be of the party. Poncet, who was likewise on bad terms with the consul, neither inclined to lose the merits of his travels into Abyssinia, nor trust the recital of it to Monhenaut, or to the manner in which it might be represented in the consul's letters. These three, Monhenaut, Poncet, and Verseau, set out therefore for Paris with very different views and designs. They embarked at Bulac, the shipping-place of Cairo upon the Nile, taking with them the ears of the dead elephant.

The remaining part of the present, brought for the king of France by this illustrious embassy, was an Abyssinian boy, a slave bought by Murat, and who had been hid from the search of the Sheriffe, when he forcibly took from him the two Abyssinian girls, also part of the intended present. This boy no sooner embarked on board the vessel at Baluc than a great tumult arose. The janizaries took the boy out of the vessel by force, and delivered him to Mustapha Cazdagli, their kaya; nor could all the interest of M. de Maillet and the French nation, or all the manœuvres of the Jesuits, ever recover him.

As for Monhenaut, Poncet, and Verseau, his protectors, they were obliged to hide themselves from the violence of the mob, nor dared they again to appear till the vessel sailed. And happy it was for them that this fell out at Cairo; for, had they offered to embark him at Alexandria, in all probability it would have cost them their lives.

I must beg leave here to suggest to the reader, how dangerous, as well as how absurd, was the plan of this embassy. It was to consist of twenty-eight Abyssinians, twelve of whom were to be sons of noble fa-

milies, all to be embarked to France. What a pleasant day would the embarkation have been to M. de Maillet! What an honourable appearance for his king, in the eyes of other Christian princes, to have seen twenty-eight Christians under his immediate protection, twelve of whom we might say were princes (as all the nobility in Abyssinia are directly of the family of the king), from motives of vanity only, by the pride of the Jesuits, and the ignorance of the consul, hurried in one day into apostacy and slavery! Whatever Maillet thought of Poncet's conduct, his bringing Murat, and him only, cook as he was, was the very luckiest accident of his life.

I know French flatterers will say this would not have happened, or, if it had, a vengeance would have followed, worthy the occasion and the resentment of so great a king, and would have prevented all such violations of the law of nations for the future. To this I answer, The mischief would have been irreparable, and the revenge taken, however complete, would not have restored them their religion; and, without their religion, they themselves would not have returned into their own country, but would have remained necessary sacrifices, which the pride and rashness of the Jesuits had made to the faith of Mahomet.

Besides, where is the threatened revenge for the assassination of M. du Roule, then actual ambassador from the king of France, of which I am now to speak? Was not the law of nations violated in the strongest manner possible by his murder, and without the smallest provocation? What vengeance was taken for this? —Just the same as would have been taken for the other injury; for the Jesuits and consul would have concealed the one, as tenderness for the Franciscan friars had made them cover the other, lest their abominable wickedness should be exposed. If the court of France

did not, their consul in Cairo should have known what the consequence would be of decoying twenty-eight Abyssinians from their own country, to be perverted from their own religion, and remain slaves and Mahometans at Cairo, a nuisance to all European nations established there.

Upon the arrival of the triumvirate at Paris, Monhenaut immediately repaired to the minister; Verseau was introduced to the king, and Poncet, soon after, had the same honour. He was then led as a kind of shew, through all Paris, clothed in the Abyssinian dress, and decorated with his gold chain. But while he was vainly amusing himself with this silly pageantry, the consul's letters, and the comments made upon them by Monhenaut, went directly to destroy the credit of his ever having been in Abyssinia, and of the reality of Murat's embassy.

The Franciscan friars, authors of the murder of M. du Roule, enemies to the mission, as being the work of the Jesuits; M. Piques, member of the Sorbonne, a body never much distinguished for promoting discoveries, or encouraging liberal and free inquiry; Abbé Renaudot, M. le Grande, and some ancient linguists, who, with great difficulty, by the industry of M. Ludolf, had attained to a very superficial knowledge of the Abyssinian tongue, all fell furiously upon Poncet's narrative of his journey. One found fault with the account he gave of the religion of the country, because it was not so conformable to the rites of the church of Rome, as they had from their own imagination and prejudice, and for their own ends, conceived it to be. Others attacked the truth of the travels, from improbabilities found, or supposed to be found, in the description of the countries through which he had passed; while others discovered the forgery of his letters, by faults found in the orthography of that

language, not one book of which, at that day, they had ever seen.

All these empty criticisms have been kept alive by the merit of the book; by this alone they have any further chance of reaching posterity; while, by all candid readers, this itinerary, short and incomplete as it is, will not fail to be received as a valuable acquisition to the geography of these unknown countries of which it treats.

I think it but a piece of duty to the memory of a fellow traveller, to the lovers of truth, and the public in general, to state the principal objections upon which this outcry against Poncet was raised; that, by the answers they admit of, the world may judge whether they are or are not founded in candour, and that before they are utterly swallowed up in oblivion.

The first is, that of the learned Renaudot, who says he cannot conceive how an Ethiopian could be called by the name of Murat. To this I answer, Poncet, de Maillet, and the Turkish basha, say Murat was an Armenian, a hundred times over; but M. Renaudot, upon his own authority, makes him an Ethiopian, and then lays the blame upon others, who are not so ignorant as himself.

Secondly, Poncet asserts Gondar was the capital of Ethiopia; whereas the Jesuits have made no mention of it; and this is supposed a strong proof of Poncet's forgery. I answer, The Jesuits were banished in the end of Socinios's reign, and the beginning of that of his son Facilidas, that is about the year 1632; they were finally extirpated in the end of this last prince's reign, that is before the year 1666, by his ordering the last Jesuit, Bernard Nogueyra, to be publicly hanged. Now, Gondar was not built till the end of the reign of Hannes I. who was grandson to Socinios, that is, about the year 1680. Unless, then, these

holy Jesuits, who, if we believe the missionaries, had all of them a sight into futurity before their martyrdom, had from these their last visions, described Gondar as capital of Abyssinia, it does not occur to me how they could be historians of a fact, that had not existence till 50 years after they were dead.

Thirdly, Poncet speaks of towns and villages in Ethiopia; whereas it is known there are no towns, villages, or cities, but Axum. I believe, that if the Abyssinians, who built the large and magnificent city of Axuma, never had other cities, towns, and villages, they were in this the most singular people upon earth; or, if places where 6000 inhabitants live together in contiguous houses, separated with broad streets where there are churches and markets, be not towns and villages, I do not know the meaning of the term; but if these are towns, Poncet has said truth; and many more such towns, which he never did see nor describe, are in Abyssinia at this day.

Fourthly, The Abyssinians live, and always have lived, in tents, not in houses. It would have been a very extraordinary idea in people living in tents to have built such a city as Axum, whose ruins are as large as those of Alexandria; and it would be still more extraordinary, that people, in such a climate as Abyssinia, in the whole of which there is scorching weather for six months, deluges of rain, storms of wind, thunder, lightning, and hurricanes, such as are unknown in Europe, for the other six, should choose to live in tents, after knowing how to build such cities as Axum. I wonder a man's understanding does not revolt against such absurdities in the moment he is stating them.

The Abyssinians, while at war, use tents and encampments, to secure the liberty of movements and changing of ground, and defend themselves, when

stationary, from the inclemency of the weather. But no tent has, I believe, yet been invented, that could stand in the fields in that country from June to September; and they have not yet formed an idea of Abyssinia who could suppose this.

I conceive it is ignorance of the language which has led these learned men into this mistake. The Abyssinians call a house, standing by itself, allotted to any particular purpose, Bet. So Bet Negus is a palace, or the house of a king; Bet Christian is a church, or a house for Christian worship; whilst Bet Mocha is a prison, or house under ground. But houses in towns or villages are called Taines, from the Abyssinian word Tain, to sleep, lie down, rest, or repose. I suppose the similitude of this word to tents has drawn these learned critics to believe, that, instead of towns, these were only collections of tents. But still I think, no one acquainted with the Abyssinian language, or without being so, would be so void of understanding as to believe, a people that had built Axum of stone, should endure, for ages after, a tropical winter in bare tents.

The fifth thing that fixes falsehood upon Poncet is, that he describes delicious valleys beyond European ideas; beautiful plains, covered with odoriferous trees and shrubs, to be everywhere in his way on the entrance of Abyssinia; whereas, when Salidan's brother conquered this country, the Arabian books say they found it destitute of all this fruitfulness. But, with all submission to the Arabian books, to Abbe Renaudot and his immense reading, I will maintain, that neither Salidan, nor his brother, nor any of his tribe, ever conquered the country Poncet describes, nor were in it, or ever saw it a distance.

The province, where Poncet found these beautiful scenes, lies between lat. 12 and 13°. The soil is

rich, black mould, which six months tropical rain are needed to water sufficiently, where the sun is vertical to it twice a-year, and stationary, with respect to it, for several days, at the distance of 10°, and at a lesser distance still for several months; where the sun, though so near, is never seen, but a thick screen of watery clouds is constantly interposed, and yet the heat is such, that Fahrenheit's thermometer rises to 100° in the shade. Can any one be so ignorant in natural history as to doubt, that, under these circumstances, a luxuriant, florid, odoriferous vegetation must be the consequence? Is not this the case in every continent, or island, within these limits, all round the globe?

But Poncet contradicts the Arabian books, and all travellers, modern and ancient; for they unanimously agree that this country is a dreary miserable desert, producing nothing but dora, which is millet, and such like things, of little or no value. I wish sincerely that M. Renaudot, when attacking a man's reputation, had been so good as to name the author, on whose authority he relied. I shall take upon me to deny, there ever was an Arabian book which treated of this country. And with regard to the ancient and modern travellers, his quotations from them are, if possible, still more visionary and ridiculous. The only ancient travellers, who, I believe, ever visited that country, were Cambyses's ambassadors; who probably passed this part of Poncet's track when they went to the Macrobii; and the most modern authors (if they can be called modern) that came nearest to it, were the men sent by Nero * to discover the country, whose journey is very doubtful; and they, when they

* Plin. vol. 1. lib. 6. cap. 30. p. 376.

approached the parts described by Poncet, say "the country began to be green and beautiful." Now, I wish M. Renaudot had named any traveller more modern than these messengers of Nero, or more ancient than those ambassadors of Cambyses, who has travelled through and described the country of the Shangalla.

I, who have lived months in that province, and am, I believe, the only traveller that ever did so, must corroborate every word Poncet has said upon this occasion. To dwell upon landscapes and picturesque views, is a matter more proper for a poet than a historian. Those countries, which are described by Poncet, merit a pen much more able to do them justice, than either his, or mine.

It will be remembered when I say this, it is of the country of the Shangalla, between lat. 12 and 13° north; that this is the people who inhabit a woody stripe, called Kolla, about 40 or 50 miles broad, that is from north to south, bounded by the mountainous country of Abyssinia, till they join the Nile at Fazuclo, on the west.

I have also said, that, for the sake of commerce, these Shangalla have been extirpated in two places, which are like two gaps, or chasms, in which are built towns and villages, and through which caravans pass between Sennaar and Abyssinia. All the rest of this country is impervious and inaccessible, unless by an armed force. Many armies have perished here. It is a tract totally unknown, unless from the small detail that I have entered into concerning it in my travels.

And here I must set the critic right also, as to what he says of the produce of these parts. There is no grain called dara, at least that I know of. If he meant millet, he should have called it dora. It is not

a mark of barrenness in the ground where this grows: part of the finest land in Egypt is sown with it. The banks of the Nile, which produce dora, would also produce wheat; but the inhabitants of the desert like this better; it goes farther in use, and does not subject them to the violent labour of the plough, to which all inhabitants of extremely hot countries are averse.

The same may be said of what he remarks with regard to cotton. The finest valleys in Syria, watered by the cool refreshing springs that fall from Mount Libanus, are planted with this shrub; and, in the same grounds alternately, the tree which produces its sister in manufacture, silk, whose valley is greatly enhanced by the addition. Cotton clothes all Ethiopia; cotton is the basis of its commerce with India, and of the commerce between England, France, and the Levant; and, were it not for some such ignorant superficial reasoners as Abbé Renaudot, cotton, after wool, should be the favourite manufacture of Great Britain. It will in time take place of that ungrateful culture, flax; will employ more hands, and be a more ample field for distinguishing the ingenuity of our manufacturers.

We see, then, how the least consideration possible destroys these ill-founded objections, upon which these very ignorant enemies of Poncet attempted to destroy his credit, and rob him of the merit of his journey. At last they ventured to throw off the mask entirely, by producing a letter supposed to be written from Nubia by an Italian friar, who asserts roundly, that he hears Poncet was never at the capital of Ethiopia, nor ever had audience of Yasous; but stole the clothes and money of father Brevedent, then married, and soon after forsook his wife and Ethiopia together.

Maillet could have easily contradicted this, had

he acted honestly; for Hagi Ali had brought him the king of Abyssinia's letter, who thanked him for his having sent Poncet, and signified to him his recovery. But without appealing to M. Maillet upon the subject, I conceive nobody will doubt, that Hagi Ali had a commission to bring a physician from Cairo to cure his master, and that Poncet was proposed as that physician, with consent of the consul. Now, after having carried Poncet the length of Bartcho, where it is agreed he was when Brevedent died (for he was supposed there to have robbed that father of his money), what could be Hagi Ali's reason for not permitting him to proceed half a day's journey farther to the capital, and presenting him to the king, who had been at the pains and expence of sending for him from Egypt? What excuse could Hagi Ali make for not producing him, when he must have delivered the consul's letters, telling him that Poncet was come with the caravan, for the purpose of curing him?

Besides, this, M. de Maillet saw Hagi Ali afterwards at Cairo, where he reproached him with his cruel behaviour, both to Poncet and friar Justin, another monk that had come along with him from Ethiopia. Maillet then must have been fully instructed of Poncet's whole life and conversation in Ethiopia, and needed not the Italian's supposed communication to know whether or not he had been in Ethiopia. Besides, Maillet makes use of him as the forerunner of the other embassy he was then preparing to Gondar, and to that same king Yasous, which would have been a very strange step had he doubted of his having been there before.

Supposing all this not enough, still we know he returned by Jidda, and the consul corresponded with him there. Now, how did he get from Bartcho to the Red Sea without passing the capital, and without

the king's orders or knowledge? Who franked him at those numerous and dangerous barriers at Woggora, Lamalmon, the Tacazze, Kella, and Adowa, where, though I had the authority of the king, I could not sometimes pass without calling force to my assistance? Who freed him from the avarice of the Baharnagash, and the much more formidable rapacity of that murderer the Naybe, who, we have seen in the history of this reign, attempted to plunder the king's own factor Musa, though his master was within three days journey, and at the head of an army, that, in a few hours could have effaced every vestige of where Masuah had stood? All this, then, is a ridiculous fabrication of lies; the work, as I have before said, of those who were concerned in the affair of the unhappy Du Roule.

Poncet, having lost all credit, retired from Paris in disgrace, without any further gratification than that which he at first received. He carried to Cairo with him, however, a gold watch and a mirror, which he was to deliver to the consul as a present to his companion Murat, whose subsistence was immediately stopped, and liberty given him to return to Ethiopia.

Nor did Maillet's folly stop here. After giving poor Murat all the ill usage a man could possibly suffer, he entrusted him with a Jesuit * whom he was to introduce into Ethiopia, where he would certainly have lost his life, had not the bad treatment he received by the way made him return before he arrived at Masuah.

The first miscarriage seemed only to have confirmed the Jesuits more in their resolution of producing an embassy. But it now took another form. Politi-

* Father Bernat, a Frenchman.

cians and statesmen became actors in it, without a thought having been bestowed to diminish the enemies of the scheme, or render their endeavours useless, by a superior knowledge of the manners and customs of the country through which this embassy was to pass.

No adventurer or vagrant physician was to be employed in this second embassy. A minister, versed in languages, negociations, and treaties, accompanied with proper drugomans and officers, was to be sent to Abyssinia, to cement a perpetual friendship and commerce between two nations, that had not a national article to exchange with each other, nor way to communicate it by sea or land. The minister, who must have known this, very wisely, at giving his fiat, pitched upon the consul M. de Maillet to be the ambassador, as a man who was acquainted with the causes of Poncet's failure, and, by following an opposite course, could bring this embassy to a happy conclusion for both nations.

Maillet considered himself as a general, whose business was to direct, and not to execute. A tedious and troublesome journey, through dangerous deserts, was out of the sphere of his closet, beyond the limits of which he did not chuse to venture. Beyond these limits, all was desert to him. He excused himself from the embassy, but gave in a memorial to serve as a rule for the conduct of his successor in the nomination, in a country he had never seen; but this, being afterwards adopted as a well-considered regulation, proved one of the principal causes of the miscarriage and tragedy that followed.

M. Noir du Roule, vice-consul at Damiata, was pitched upon as the ambassador to go to Abyssinia. He was a young man of some merit, had a considerable degree of ambition, and a moderate skill in the

common languages spoken in the east, but was absolutely ignorant of that of the country to which he was going, and, what was worse, of the customs and prejudices of the nations through which he was to pass. Like most of his countrymen, he had a violent predilection for the dress, carriage, and manners of France, and a hearty contempt for those of all other nations; this he had not address enough to disguise, and this endangered his life. The whole French nation at Cairo were very ill disposed towards him, in consequence of some personal slight, or imprudence he had been guilty of; as also towards any repetition of projects which brought them, their commerce, and even their lives, into danger, as the last had done.

The merchants, therefore, were averse to this embassy; but the Jesuits and Maillet were the avowed supporters of it, and they had with them the authority of the king. But each aimed to be principal, and had very little confidence in, or communication with, their associates.

As for the Capuchins and Franciscans, they were mortally offended at M. de Maillet for having, by the introduction of the Jesuits, and the power of the king of France, forcibly wrested from them the Ethiopic mission, which the pope had granted, and which the sacred congregation of cardinals had confirmed. These, by their continual communication with the Cophts, the Christians of Egypt, had so far brought them to adopt their designs, as, one and all, to regard the miscarriage of du Roule and his embassy, as what they were bound to procure from honour and mutual interest.

Things being in this state, M. du Roule arrived at Cairo, took upon him the charge of the embassy, and from that moment the intrigues began.

The consul had persuaded du Roule, that the proper presents he should take with him to Sennaar were prints of the king and queen of France, with crowns upon their heads; mirrors, magnifying and multiplying objects, and deforming them; when brocade, satin, and trinkets of gold or silver, iron or steel, would have been infinitely more acceptable.

Elias, an Armenian, a confidential servant of the French nation, was first sent by the way of the Red Sea into Abyssinia, to proceed to Gondar by Masuah, and prepare Yasous for the reception of that ambassador; to whom he, Elias, was to be the interpreter. So far it was well concerted; but, in preparing for the end, the middle was neglected. A number of friars were already at Sennaar, and had poisoned the minds of that people, naturally barbarous, brutal, and jealous. Money, in presents, had gained the great; while lies, calculated to terrify and enrage the lower class of people, had been told so openly and avowedly, and gained such root, that the ambassador, when he arrived at Sennaar, found it, in the first place, necessary to make a *proces verbal*, or what we call a precognition, in which the names of the authors, and substance of these reports, were mentioned; and of this he gave advice to M. de Maillet; but the names and these papers perished with him.

On the 9th of July 1704, M. du Roule set out from Cairo, attended by a number of people, who, with tears in their eyes, foresaw the pit into which he was falling. He embarked on the Nile; and, in his passage to Siout, he found at every halting-place some new and dangerous lie propagated, which could have no other end but his destruction.

Belac, a Moor, and factor for the king of Sennaar, was chief of the caravan which he then joined. Du Roule had employed, while at Cairo, all the usual

means to gain this man to his interest, and had every reason to suppose he had succeeded. But, on his meeting him at Siout, he had the mortification to find that he was so far changed, that it cost him 250 dollars to prevent his declaring himself an abettor of his enemies. And this, perhaps, would not have sufficed, had it not been for the arrival of Fornetti, drugoman to the French nation at Cairo, at Siout, and with him a capigi and chiaoux from Ismael Bey, the port of janizaries, and from the basha of Cairo, expressly commanding the governor of Siout, and Belac chief of the caravan, to look to the safety of Du Roule, and protect him at the hazard of their lives, and as they should answer to them.

All the parties concerned were then called together; and the fedtah, or prayer of peace, used in long and dangerous journies, was solemnly recited and assented to by them all; in consequence of which, every individual became bound to stand by his companion even to death, and not separate himself from him, nor see him wronged, though it was for his own gain or safety. This test brought all the secret to light; for Ali Chelibi, governor of Siout, informed the ambassador, that the Christian merchants and Franciscan friars were in a conspiracy, and had sworn to defeat and disappoint his embassy even by the loss of his life; and that, by presents, they had gained him to be a partner in that conspiracy.

Belac, moreover, told him, that the patriarch of the Cophts had assured the principal people, of which that caravan consisted, that the Franks then travelling with him were not merchants, but sorcerers, who were going to Ethiopia, to obstruct, or cut off, the course of the Nile, that it might no longer flow into Egypt; and that the general resolution was to drive the Franks from the caravan at some place in the desert which

suited their design, which was to reduce them to perish by hunger or thirst, or else to be otherwise slain, and no more heard of.

The caravan left Siout the 12th of September. In twelve days they passed the lesser desert, and came to Khargue, where they were detained six days by a young man, governor of that place, who obliged M. du Roule to pay him 120 dollars, before he would suffer him to pass farther; and at the same time forced him to sign a certificate, that he had been permitted to pass without paying any thing. This was the first sample of the usage he was to expect in the further prosecution of his journey.

On the 3d of October, they entered the great desert of Selima; and, on the 18th of the same month, they arrived at Machou, or Moscho, on the Nile, where their caravan staid a considerable time, till the merchants had transacted their business. It was at this place the ambassador learned, that several Franciscan friars had passed the caravan while it remained at Siout, and advanced to Sennaar, where they had staid some time; but had lately left that capital upon news of the caravan's approaching, and had retired, nobody knew whither.

A report was soon after spread abroad at Cairo, but no one could ever learn whence it came, that the ambassador, after arriving at Dongola, had been assassinated there. This, indeed, proved false; but was, in the mean time, a mournful presage of the melancholy catastrophe that happened soon afterwards.

M. du Roule arrived at Sennaar towards the end of May, and wrote at that time; but a packet of letters was after brought to the consul at Cairo, bearing date the 18th of June. The ambassador there mentions, that he had been well received by the king of Sen-

naar, who was a young man, fond of strangers; that particular attention had been shewn him by Sid Achmet-el-coom; or, as he should have called him, Achmed Sid-el-coom, i. e. Achmet, master of the household. This officer, sent by the king to visit the baggage of the ambassador, could not help testifying his surprise to find it so inconsiderable, both in bulk and value.

He said the king had received letters from Cairo, informing him that he had twenty chests of silver along with him. Achmet likewise told him, that he himself had received information, by a letter under the hand and seal of the most respectable people of Cairo, warning him not to let M. du Roule pass; for the intention of his journey into Abyssinia was to prevail on Yasous to attack Masuah and Suakem, and take them from the Turks. Achmet would not suffer the bales, intended for the king of Abyssinia, to be opened or visited, but left them in the hands of the ambassador.

M. du Roule, however, in writing this account to the consul, intimated to him, that he thought himself in danger; and declares that he did not believe there was on earth so barbarous, brutal, and treacherous a people, as were the Nubians.

It happened that the king's troops had gained some advantage over the rebellious Arabs, on which account there was a festival at court; and M. du Roule thought he was obliged to exert himself in every thing which could add to the magnificence of the occasion. With this intention he shaved his beard, and dressed himself like a European; and in this manner he received the visit of the minister Achmet. M. Macé, in a letter to the consul of the above date, complains of this novelty. He says it shocked every body;

and that the mirrors *, which multiplied and deformed the objects, made the lower sort of the people look upon the ambassador and his company as sorcerers.

Upon great festivals, in most Mahometan kingdoms, the king's wives have a privilege to go out of their apartments, and visit any thing new that is to be seen. Those of the king of Sennaar are very ignorant, brutish, fantastic, and easily offended. Had M. du Roule known the manners of the country, he would have treated these black majesties with strong spirits, sweetmeats, or scented waters; and he might then have shewed them with impunity any thing that he pleased.

But, being terrified with the glasses, and disgusted by his inattention, they joined in the common cry, that the ambassador was a magician, and contributed all in their power to ruin him with the king; which, after all, they did not accomplish, without the utmost repugnance and difficulty. The farthest length at first they could get this prince to go, was, to demand 3000 dollars of the ambassador. This was expressly refused, and private disgust followed.

M. du Roule being now alarmed for his own safety, insisted upon liberty to set out forthwith for Abyssinia. Leave was accordingly granted him; and after his baggage was loaded, and every thing prepared, he was countermanded by the king, and ordered to return to his own house. A few days after this he again procured leave to depart; which a short time after was again countermanded. At last, on the 10th of November, a messenger from the king brought him

* We have seen these were recommended by M. Maillet, the consul.

final leave to depart, which, having every thing ready for that purpose, he immediately did.

The ambassador walked on foot, with two country Christians on one hand, and Gentil, his French servant, on the other. He refused to mount on horseback, but gave his horse to a Nubian servant to lead. M. Lipi, and M. Macé, the two drugomans, were both on horseback. The whole company being now arrived in the middle of the large square before the king's house, the common place of execution for criminals, four blacks attacked the ambassador, and murdered him with four strokes of sabres. Gentil fell next, by the same hands, at his master's side. After him M. Lipi and the two Christians; the two latter protesting that they did not belong to the ambassador's family.

M. du Roule died with the greatest magnanimity, fortitude, and resignation. Knowing his person was sacred by the law of nations, he disdained to defend it by any other means, remitting his revenge to the guardians of that law; and he exhorted all his attendants to do the same. But M. Macé, the drugoman, young and brave, and a good horseman, was not of the sheep kind, to go quietly to the slaughter. With his pistols he shot two of the assassins that attacked him, one after the other, dead upon the spot; and was continuing to defend himself with his sword, when a horseman, coming behind him, thrust him through the back with a lance, and threw him dead upon the ground.

Thus ended the second attempt of converting Abyssinia by an embassy; a scheme, if we believe M. de Maillet, which had cost government a considerable expence; for, in a memorial, of the 1st of October 1706, concerning the death of M. du Roule, he makes the money and effects which he had along with him, when

murdered, to amount to 200 purses, or L.25,000 Sterling. This, however, is not probable; because, in another place, he speaks of M. du Roule's having demanded of him a small supply of money while at Sennaar, which friar Joseph, a capuchin, refused to carry for him. Such a supply would not have been necessary, if the ambassador had with him such a sum as that already mentióned; therefore I imagine it was exaggerated, with a view to make the Turkish basha of Suakem quarrel with the king of Sennaar about the recovering of it.

The friars, who were in numbers at Sennaar, left it immediately before the coming of M. du Roule. This they might have done without any bad intention towards him; they returned, however, immediately after his murder. This, I think, very clearly constitutes them the authors of it: for, had they not been privy to, and promoters of, the assassination, they would have fled with fear and abhorrence from a place where six of their brethren had been lately so treacherously slain, and were not yet buried, but their carcasses abandoned to the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, and where they themselves, therefore, could have no asssurance of safety.

They however, pretended, first to lay the blame upon the king of Abyssinia, then upon the king of Sennaar, and then they divided it between them both. But Elias, arriving at Gondar, vindicated that prince, as we shall presently see; and the list of names taken at Sennaar, and a long series of correspondence, which afterwards came out, and a chain of evidence which was made public, incontestibly prove that the king of Sennaar was but an agent, and indeed an unwilling one, who two several times repented of his bloody design, and made M. du Roule return to his own house to evade the execution of it.

The blood, then, of this gallant and unfortunate gentleman undoubtedly lies upon the heads of the reformed Franciscan friars, and their brethren, the friars of the Holy Land. The interest of these two bodies, and a bigotted prince, such as Louis XIV. then was, was more than sufficient to stop all inquiry, and hinder any vengeance to be taken on those holy assassins. But he who, unperceived, follows deliberate murder through all its concealments and the darkness of its ways, in a few years required satisfaction for the blood of Du Roulé, at a time and place unforeseen, and unexpected.

We shall now return to Gondar, to king Yasous, who being recovered of his disease, and having dismissed his physician, was preparing to set out on a campaign against the Galla.

Yasous, for his first wife, had married Ozoro Malacotawit, a lady of great family and connections, in the province of Gojam. By her he had a son, Tecla Haimanout, who was grown to manhood, and had hitherto lived in the most dutiful affection and submission to his father, who, on his part seemed to place unlimited confidence in his son. He now gave a proof of this, not very common in the annals of Abyssinia, in leaving Tecla Haimanout behind him at an age when he was fit to reign, appointing him Betwudet, with absolute power to govern in his absence. Yasous had a mistress whom he tenderly loved, a woman of great quality likewise, whose name was Ozoro Keduste. She was sister to his Fit-Auraris, Agne, a very distinguished and capable officer, and by her he had three children, David, Hannes, and Jonathan.

It happened, while he was watching the motions of the Galla, news were brought that Ozoro Keduste had been taken ill of a fever; and though, upon this intelligence, he disposed his affairs, so as to return

with all possible expedition, yet when he came to Bercante, the lady's house, he found that she had not only been dead, but had been for some time buried. All his presence of mind now left him; he fell into the most violent transport of wild despair, and, ordering her tomb to be opened, he went down into it, taking his three sons along with him, and became so frantic at the sight of the corpse, that it was with the utmost difficulty he could be forced again to leave the sepulchre. He returned first to Gondar; then he retired to an island in the lake Tzana, there to mourn his lost mistress.

But before this, Elias, ignorant of what had passed at Sennaar, presented M. de Maillet's letter to him, beseeching his leave for M. du Roule to enter Abyssinia, and come into his presence. This he readily procured: Yasous was fond of strangers, and not only granted his request, but sent a man of his own to Sennaar, with letters to the king, to protect and defray the expences of the ambassador to Gondar. This man, who had affairs of his own, loitered away a great deal of time in the journey, so that Elias, upon first hearing of the arrival of the ambassador, set out himself to meet him at Sennaar. The king, in the mean time, having finished his mourning, dispatched Badjerund Oustas to his son the Betwudet, at Gondar, ordering him forthwith to send him a body of his household troops to rendezvous on the banks of the lake, opposite to the island Tchekla Wunze, where he then had his residence.

It has been said, contrary to all truth, by those who have wrote travels into this country, that sons, born in marriage, have the same preference in succession here as they have in other countries. But this, as I have said, is entirely without foundation: For, in the first place, there is no such a thing as a regular marriage in

Abyssinia; all consists in mere consent of parties. But, allowing this to be regular, not only natural children, that is those born in concubinage where no marriage was in contemplation; and adulterous bastards, that is, the sons of unmarried women by married men; and all manner of sons whatever, succeed equally as well to the crown as to private inheritance. There cannot be a more clear example of this than in the present king, who, although he had a son, Tecla Haimanout, born of the queen Malacotawit in wedlock, was yet succeeded by three bastard brothers, all sons of Yasous, born in adultery, that is, in the life of the queen. David and Hannes were sons of the king, by his favourite Ozoro Keduste; Bacuffa, by another lady of quality.

Although the queen, Malacotawit, had passed over, with seeming indifference, the preference the king had given his mistress, Ozoro Keduste, during her lifetime, yet, from a very unaccountable kind of jealousy, she could not forgive those violent tokens of affection the king had shewn after her death, by going down with his sons, and remaining with the body in the grave. Full of resentment for this, she had persuaded her son, Tecla Haimanout, that Yasous had determined to deprive him of his succession, to send him and her, his mother, both to Wechnè, and place his bastard brother, David, son of Ozoro Keduste, upon the throne.

The queen had been very diligent in attaching to her the principal people about the court. By her own friends, and the assistance of the discontented and banished monks, she had raised a great army in Gojam, under her brothers, Dermin and Paulus. Tecla Haimanout had shewn great signs of wisdom and talents for governing, and very much attached to himself some of his father's oldest and ablest servants.

It was, therefore, agreed, in return to Yasous's message by Oustas, to answer, That, after so long a reign, and so much bloodshed, the king, would do well to retire to some convent for the rest of his life, and atone for the many great sins he had committed; and that he should leave the kingdom in the hands of his son Tecla Haimanout, as the ancient King Caleb had resigned his crown into the hands of St Pantaleon, in favour of his son Guebra Mascal. As it was not very safe to deliver such a message to a king such as Yasous, it was therefore sent to him by a common foot-soldier, who could not be an object of resentment.

The king received it at Tchekla Wunze, the island in the lake Tzana, where he was then residing. He answered with great sharpness, by the same messenger, "That he had been long informed who these were that had seduced his son, Tecla Haimanout, at once from his duty to him as his father, and his allegiance as his sovereign; that, though he did not hold them to be equal in sanctity to St Pantaleon, yet, such as they were, he proposed immediately to meet them at Gondar, and settle there his son's coronation."

This ironical message was perfectly understood. Those of the court that were with Tecla Haimanout, and the inhabitants of the capital, met together, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, to live and die with their king Tecla Haimanout. The severity of Yasous was well known; his provocation now was a just one; and the measure of vengeance that awaited him, every one concerned knew to be such, that there was no alternative but death or victory.

Neither party were slack in preparations. Kasmati Honorius, governor of Damot, a veteran officer, and old servant of Yasous, collected a large body of troops, and marched them down the west side of the lake. Yasous having there joined them, and putting him-

self at the head of his army, began his march, rounding the lake on its south side towards Dingleber.

Nor did Tecla Haimanout delay a moment after hearing his father was in motion, but marched with his army from Gondar, attended with all the ensigns of royalty. He encamped at Bartcho, in that very field where Za Denghel was defeated and slain by his rebellious subjects. Thinking this a post ominous to kings, he resolved to wait for his father there, and give him battle.

The king, in his march through the low country of Dembea, was attacked by a putrid fever, very common in those parts, which so increased upon him that he was obliged to be carried back to Tchekla Wunze. This accident discouraged his whole party. His army, with Honorius, took the road to Gojam, but did not disperse, awaiting the recovery of the king.

But the queen, Malacotawit, no sooner heard that Yasous, her husband, was sick at Tchekla Wunze, than she sent to her son, Tecla Haimanout, to leave his unwholesome station, and march back immediately to Gondar; and, as soon as he returned, she dispatched her two brothers, Dermin and Paulus, with a body of soldiers and two Mahometan musqueteers, who, entering the island Tchekla Wunze by surprise, shot and disabled the king while sitting on a couch; immediately after which, Dermin thrust him through with a sword. They attempted afterwards to burn the body, in order to avoid the ill-will the sight of it must occasion. In this, however, they were prevented by the priests of the island, and the neighbouring nobility, who took possession of the body, washed it, and then carried it in a kind of triumph, with every mark of magnificence due to the burial of a king, into the small island of Mitraha, where lay the bodies of all his ances-

tors, and where I have seen the body of this king still entire.

Nor did the prince, his son, Tecla Haimanout, now king, discourage the people in the respect they voluntarily paid to his father. On the contrary, that parricide himself shewed every outward mark of duty, to which inwardly his heart had been long a stranger.

Poncet, who saw this king, gives this character of him: He says he was a man very fond of war, but averse to the shedding of blood. However this may appear a contradiction, or said for the sake of the antithesis, it really was the true character of this prince, who, fond of war, and in the perpetual career of victory, did, by pushing his conquests as far as they could go, inevitably occasion the spilling of much blood. Yet, when his army was not in the field, though he detected a multitude of conspiracies among priests and other people at home, whose lives, in consequence, were forfeited to the law, he very rarely, either from his own motives, or the persuasion of others, could be induced to inflict capital punishment, though often strongly provoked to it.

Upon his death, the people unanimously gave to him the name of Tallac, which signifies *the Great*, a name he has ever since enjoyed unimpeached in the Abyssinian annals, or history of his country, from which this account of his reign is taken.

END OF VOLUME THIRD.

Printed by George Ramsay & Co.
Edinburgh, 1812.

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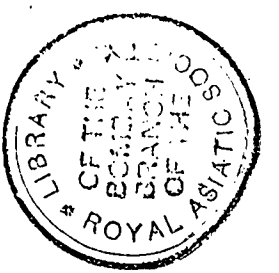

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